

National Park Service • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton National Park
Yellowstone National Park
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway
National Elk Refuge



SNAKE RIVER HEADWATERS
COMPREHENSIVE RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On March 30, 2009, passage of the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act added 414 miles of rivers and streams of the Snake River Headwaters to the national wild and scenic rivers system.¹ These rivers flow across National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lands, as well as a small portion of state and private lands. The purpose of the wild and scenic rivers designation is to protect the free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have prepared a comprehensive river management plan / environmental assessment (CRMP/EA) for the Snake River Headwaters within Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, and the National Elk Refuge. Due to the sheer size of the wild and scenic river designation, a collaborative planning approach was vital. Bridger-Teton National Forest developed a separate but concurrent management plan for river segments within or along their respective administrative boundaries. Every step in developing these plans was completed cooperatively to guarantee a seamless and comprehensive management approach for the Snake River Headwaters designation.

The need for this CRMP/EA is rooted in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). The act requires comprehensive planning for designated rivers to provide for the protection of the free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs), which are the rare, unique, or exemplary characteristics that make a river eligible for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system. To meet this and other specific requirements of the act, the plan documents river boundaries and segment classifications; provides a clear process for the protection of wild and scenic river values; determines the appropriate types and levels of development; and addresses user capacity, which establishes the kinds and amounts of visitor use that are appropriate in the river corridors consistent with park and refuge mandates.

Three alternatives were identified in the CRMP/EA. Alternative A is the “no-action” alternative, which describes the continuation of current management to provide a basis for comparing the other alternatives. Alternative B focuses on enhancements to visitor experience and increased access and development for a diversity of river-based recreational activities. Under alternative C, the headwaters would be managed as a more primitive, undeveloped, natural setting with modest improvements to enhance resource conditions and visitor experience.

1. Total river miles differ from the amounts described in the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2008 due to more accurate calculations from GIS mapping data.

SELECTED ACTION

SUMMARY

The agencies' preferred alternative (alternative C) in the CRMP/EA is the selected action. Under the selected action, visitor connections with the natural world will be emphasized through interpretive opportunities and more primitive, resource-related recreational experiences in undeveloped natural settings. Recreational activities will be consistent with the protection and enhancement of river values. In general, visitor uses will adapt to changing natural conditions such as rebraiding river channels, fluctuating water levels, seasons, or protections for sensitive habitats and nesting areas. In general, use levels will be similar to or lower than current conditions under this alternative. Park administrative activities will focus on protecting natural and cultural resources and river-based recreational values in a manner consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2008.

Environmental education and awareness will be promoted by focusing on sustainable recreational and operational practices. Native species will receive management emphasis. Preservation of cultural resources will be accomplished using techniques to avoid adverse effects.

In general, infrastructure within the river corridor, including key river access nodes, will be consolidated by removing, relocating, and/or redesigning poorly sited and/or less sustainable facilities and infrastructure. New developments and facilities will only be considered in order to benefit resources.

GOALS AND DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

As found on pages 29–31 of the CRMP/EA, the selected action includes five goal statements and associated desired future conditions that have been developed in order to protect and enhance free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values for the designated wild and scenic rivers.

Goal 1. Promote the headwaters' natural hydrological processes, channel form and function, and ability to shape the landscape. Reduce impediments to free-flowing conditions, ensure sufficient flows to protect and enhance outstandingly remarkable values, and ensure the maintenance of water quality at the highest possible level.

- **Desired Conditions**—Hydrologic features and processes, including free-flowing condition, reflect a natural river/stream ecosystem. Designated river segments remain unhindered to promote and enhance outstandingly remarkable values. Physical, chemical, and hydrological properties of the rivers reflect natural water quality conditions, which meet or exceed all applicable water quality standards. The Snake River Headwaters continues to meet criteria for *outstanding resource waters*, as defined by the State of Wyoming.

Goal 2. Protect and enhance the natural function, diversity, complexity, and resiliency of the headwaters' riparian areas, wetlands, floodplains, and adjacent uplands.

- **Desired Conditions**—Ecological integrity and processes, including natural changes and disturbances, remain unimpeded. Fundamental physical and biological processes, as well as individual species, features, and plant and animal communities function at natural levels of diversity and complexity with little human disturbance. Ecosystems, habitats, and native species impacted by human activities are restored to natural abundances, diversities, and distributions. Sensitive habitats and dynamic areas prone to natural disturbances are void of future development.

Goal 3. Protect and enhance cultural resources as important links to the human history of the river corridor, including historical and archeological sites, cultural landscapes, and ethnographic resources.

- **Desired Conditions**—The integrity of cultural, historical, archeological, and ethnographic resources is safeguarded to preserve significant attributes and uses that contribute to historical significance. Natural and built features of the cultural landscape and the concerns of traditionally associated peoples are considered in the treatment of these cultural resources. Treatments are based on sound preservation practices that enable long-term preservation of historic features, qualities, and materials. Resources that hold particular meaning to the human history of the headwaters or with traditionally associated people and groups are fully understood and managed in a sensitive manner and interpreted where appropriate.

Goal 4. Provide a diversity of opportunities and settings for visitors of varying abilities to experience, learn about, and have a direct connection with the rivers and their associated values. Such opportunities must be consistent with the values that caused the rivers to be designated.

- **Desired Conditions**—Visitors continue to have opportunities for enjoyment that are uniquely suited to the natural and cultural resources found in the Snake River Headwaters and are consistent with the values for which the rivers were designated. These opportunities help visitors to understand and appreciate the significance of the headwaters and its resources and develop a personal stewardship ethic. Visitor opportunities preserve the integrity of the surroundings; respect ecological processes; protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources and park values; and provide a high quality and a rewarding visitor experience. To the extent feasible, park programs, services, and facilities are accessible to and usable by all people, including those with disabilities. The types and levels of visitor use within designated river segments do not result in degradation of the values and purposes for which the wild and scenic river was established. Existing restrictions imposed under NPS and USFWS authorities to protect park and refuge resources remain in effect.

Goal 5. Establish appropriate land uses and associated developments, consistent with each river segment classification, that support the protection and enhancement of river values.

- **Desired Conditions**—All land uses and developments are harmonious with river resources, compatible with natural processes, and aesthetically pleasing. Land uses, developments, and operations are sustainable, energy efficient, cost-effective, and practical to the maximum degree possible. Intrinsically important scenic vistas and scenic features

are not diminished by development and continue to provide opportunities for visitors to understand, appreciate, and forge personal connections with the rivers.

KEY MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS

The following management components are included as part of the selected action to achieve the purpose of the plan and the goals and desired conditions described above. These components form the building blocks from which management strategies have been developed. Please refer to the accompanying page numbers that reference their location within the CRMP/EA.

Foundation for Wild and Scenic River Planning and Management (pages 13–21)

The foundation for preparing a comprehensive river management plan is to clearly articulate free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values of designated rivers, so that these values can be protected and enhanced in accordance with the mandate of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The CRMP/EA describes these foundation elements for the entire Snake River Headwaters along with more detailed ORV descriptions for each designated river segment.

River Classifications (page 31)

The seven designated river segments included as part of the CRMP/EA are classified as either wild or scenic, which refers to the degree of development found along the rivers. Wild rivers are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible, except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. Scenic rivers are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

As described in the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act, the upper Lewis River between Lewis Lake and Shoshone Lake and the upper Snake River from its origin to Jackson Lake are classified as wild. The lower segment of the Lewis River, the Snake River below Jackson Lake, Pacific Creek, Buffalo Fork, and the Gros Ventre River are classified as scenic. The preferred alternative management strategies have been developed to ensure all development, uses, and management activities are consistent with these river classifications.

Boundary Delineation (pages 31–44)

Establishing boundaries for newly designated wild and scenic rivers is an important step in delineating the area that will receive the greatest effort in resource protection. The CRMP/EA describes the methodology used to delineate the wild and scenic river corridor boundary and provides detailed boundary maps of each designated river segment in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Upon approval of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to publish a notice of availability of the boundary

delineation in the *Federal Register*. Wild and scenic river boundaries do not become effective until the notice of availability has been published in the *Federal Register* and until 90 days after they have been sent to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives while Congress is in session.

In-stream Flows (pages 11, 407–410)

On March 30, 2009, passage of the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act (Public Law 111-11) amended the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to add the Snake River Headwaters to the national wild and scenic rivers system. Passage of the act established the priority date for quantification of wild and scenic river water rights. Valid, existing water rights in Idaho and Wyoming are unaffected by this act including: (1) storage, management, and release of water from Jackson Lake; (2) all interstate water compacts in existence as of March 30, 2009 (including full development of any apportionment made in accordance with the compact); and (3) water rights held by the United States.

The Secretary of the Interior (or her designee) is required to apply for reserved water rights in each segment in accordance with the procedural requirements of the laws of the State of Wyoming. Appendix B of the CRMP/EA describes the dependency of wild and scenic river values on in-stream flows and provides the basis for filing for a future water right under Wyoming state law, as required by the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SELECTED ACTION

Due to the complexity of developing a comprehensive plan for multiple river segments within three national park units and a national wildlife refuge, the CRMP/EA includes a simple three-tiered approach to organizing the selected action (preferred alternative management strategies).

- The first tier includes broad-based management strategies that will be applied across the entire NPS- and USFWS-managed wild and scenic river designation. These are referred to as headwaters-wide strategies.
- The second tier includes management strategies for each of the seven designated wild and scenic river segments. These strategies address specific types and levels of development and kinds and amounts of recreation use.
- The third tier includes strategies that address types and levels of development for nine river access points along the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway.

Due to the breadth of management strategies described under each tier, this Finding of No Significant Impact incorporates these strategies by reference. Please refer to the CRMP/EA for more information using the page numbers cited below.

HEADWATERS-WIDE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

To achieve the broad goals and desired future conditions of the selected action, defined on pages 29–31 of the CRMP/EA, the following broad-based management strategies will be applied. Please refer to the accompanying page numbers that reference their location within the CRMP/EA.

- Natural resource management strategies (pages 71–73)
- Cultural resources management strategies (pages 73–74)
- Recreation management strategies (pages 74–76)
- Scenery conservation measures (page 76)
- Partnership strategies (pages 76–77)
- Development guidelines (pages 78)
- Section 7 evaluation guidelines for water resource projects (pages 78–81)
- Guidelines to address climate change (pages 81–83)
- User capacity indicators, standards, and management strategies (pages 83–87)
- Monitoring guidelines (pages 87–95)

RIVER SEGMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The second tier of the selected action includes management strategies for each of the seven designated wild and scenic river segments. These strategies vary by types and levels of development and kinds and amounts of recreation use that can be accommodated within the river corridors without adverse impacts on the outstandingly remarkable values given the goals, desired future conditions, and indicators and standards. Please refer to the accompanying page numbers that reference river segment management strategies within the CRMP/EA.

- Lewis River, wild segment, Yellowstone National Park (pages 108–109)
- Lewis River, scenic segment, Yellowstone National Park (pages 110–111)
- Snake River, wild segment, Yellowstone National Park (pages 112–113)
- Snake River, wild segment, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway (pages 114–117)
- Snake River, scenic segment, Grand Teton National Park (pages 117–120)
- Pacific Creek, scenic segment, Grand Teton National Park (pages 121–122)
- Buffalo Fork, scenic segment, Grand Teton National Park (pages 123–124)
- Gros Ventre River, scenic segment, Grand Teton National Park and National Elk Refuge (pages 125–127)

RIVER ACCESS POINTS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The third tier of the selected action includes site-specific management strategies for two river access points within John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, and seven river access points within Grand Teton National Park. The primary purpose of this site-planning effort is to address long-standing design issues to enhance resource conditions and improve access and circulation for visitors. Improvements to the facilities, boat launches, trails, and parking in the areas listed below will include universal access and meet minimum accessibility standards according to the Architectural Barriers Act, as well as the *Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas*.

Determination of feasibility for universal access will be determined during the implementation phase. Please refer to the accompanying page numbers that reference river access point management strategies within the CRMP/EA.

- Flagg Canyon boat launch area (page 135)
- Flagg Ranch boat launch area (page 137)
- Jackson Lake Dam boat launch area (page 139)
- Cattleman's Bridge boat launch area (page 141)
- Oxbow Bend overlooks (page 143)
- Pacific Creek Landing (page 145)
- Deadman's Bar Landing (page 147)
- Schwabacher Landing (page 149)
- Moose Landing (page 152)

MITIGATION MEASURES

Congress has charged the National Park Service with managing the lands under its stewardship "in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (NPS Organic Act, 16 USC 1). As a result, the National Park Service routinely evaluates and implements mitigation measures whenever conditions occur that could adversely affect the sustainability of national park system resources. To ensure the protection of resources on the National Elk Refuge, these mitigation measures will also be applied to avoid impacts within the Gros Ventre River corridor.

To ensure that implementation of the selected action protects natural and cultural resources unimpaired for future generations and provides for a high quality visitor experience, a consistent set of mitigation measures will be applied to actions proposed in CRMP/EA. The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will prepare appropriate environmental compliance reviews (i.e., those required by the National Environmental Policy Act; National Historic Preservation Act, sections 106 and 110; Archaeological Resources Protection Act; Endangered Species Act; and other relevant legislation) for future proposed actions. As part of the environmental review, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts. The park units and elk refuge could consider implementing a compliance monitoring program that will apply these mitigation measures and also include reporting protocols.

Please refer to the accompanying page numbers that reference mitigation measures and best management practices that will be applied to avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts from implementation of the selected action.

- Natural resources (pages 96–98)
- Cultural resources (pages 98–99)
- Visitor use and experience (page 99)
- Soundscapes (page 99)
- Visual resources (page 100)
- Sustainable development (page 100)
- Health and safety (page 100)

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Two other alternatives were given detailed evaluation in the CRMP/EA. This section describes the general concepts of those two alternatives. Please refer to chapters 2 and 3 of the CRMP/EA for more detailed information.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)

The no-action alternative represents continuation of current management strategies for designated portions of wild and scenic rivers within and along the boundary of Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, John D Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, and the National Elk Refuge. Under this alternative, these river segments would continue to be managed without a comprehensive river management plan. The Snake River scenic segment between Jackson Lake Dam and Moose would continue to be managed in accordance with the park's existing Snake River management plan. Park managers would continue to maintain a balance between resource preservation and visitor use in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

This alternative reflects current management practices based on law, regulation, and policy. The primary purpose of describing the no-action alternative is to provide a baseline against which to compare the other management alternatives (alternatives B and C).

ALTERNATIVE B

Under this alternative, environmentally and operationally sustainable developments would facilitate recreational experiences within the river corridors. Development would be consistent with providing new or improved access and facilities for a diversity of river-based recreational activities. Visitor connections with natural, cultural, and scenic elements would be enhanced through interpretation and education to improve appreciation of park resources and values. In general, use levels might be higher than current conditions under this alternative. Park administrative activities would focus on protecting natural and cultural resources and river-based recreational values in a manner consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act.

THE ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

According to Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (43 CFR 46.30), the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative “that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources.” It should be noted that there is no requirement that the environmentally preferred alternative and the preferred alternative be the same.

All three alternatives maintain a balance between resource preservation and protection and visitor use in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Compared to alternative A, action alternatives B and C have similar beneficial and adverse impacts because both alternatives have improvements in parking, traffic flow, river access and visitor facilities, enhanced wild and scenic river interpretation, and increased monitoring required for visitor and resource protection.

Although alternative A would sustain the river corridor, increased adverse impacts on natural and cultural resources would occur due to the current lack of systematic monitoring of resource conditions. By comparison, both alternatives B and C would implement a visitor use and resource monitoring program of the headwaters’ free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values. Where existing development is not compatible with the classification of the segment, the action alternatives strive to redesign, relocate, or remove facilities to be more compatible with the river’s classification over time. Both action alternatives would ensure that types and levels of development are designed to allow appropriate kinds and amounts of recreation use while protecting river values. Boat launches, access roads, and parking lots would be improved as necessary to prevent sedimentation of designated rivers. Under alternative B, relocation of the Pacific Creek Landing launch site would result in major, localized, long-term, adverse impacts on natural resources. Maintaining this launch site in its current location and implementing other site improvements under alternative C will better protect natural resources in this area.

Alternatives B and C protect the free-flowing condition and water quality of the designated wild and scenic rivers through monitoring and evaluating water resource projects to ensure consistency with the wild and scenic river designation. The action alternatives use closures to prevent visitor use impacts on wildlife or on sensitive geothermal features, and use of thresholds to indicate minimally acceptable levels of human disturbance. To prevent social trails and related bank erosion issues along the river, alternatives B and C improve signing and wayfinding, promote Leave No Trace principles, delineate parking areas with fencing or other barriers, and designate and delineate river access points. The implementation of a more formal review process for projects covered by section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act will provide guidance for park staff regarding projects affecting the river.

While alternative A includes ongoing headwaters-wide management strategies for the designated wild and scenic river, action alternatives B and C emphasize further collaboration with neighboring federal and state agencies to better manage the Snake River Headwaters across boundaries through scientific research, monitoring, and resource management activities. Interagency collaboration will better prevent the introduction and spread of invasive aquatic and terrestrial species within and adjacent to the designated wild and scenic river corridors. The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also work with private landowners regarding property within the wild and scenic river designation to achieve common goals for managing the river.

Alternatives B and C better protect the cultural resources within the headwaters through increased monitoring of archeological resources, historic structures, and cultural landscapes. Alternatives B and C increase interpretive and educational messaging concerning the protection of cultural river values and develop a collaborative interagency prehistoric and historic resources study of the Snake River Headwaters. These actions will enhance visitor awareness and community stewardship of important natural and cultural resources while minimizing visitor use-related resource impacts.

Alternatives B and C also better protect the headwaters' iconic scenic landscape by designing, siting, and constructing facilities and recreation sites to avoid or minimize visual intrusion to scenery and visibility. The use of signs will either be reduced or involve placing them in areas that reduce visual impacts on scenery. Vegetation and natural materials will be used to screen and blend new or existing structures with the natural landscape to improve riparian habitat, protect river values and scenery, and enhance the natural appearance of the developed areas.

Although the beneficial and adverse impacts of alternatives B and C are somewhat similar, alternative C will have lower visitor use levels and thus will have fewer associated visitor-caused impacts than alternative B. While both alternatives are protective of natural and cultural resources, alternative C emphasizes unobtrusive interpretive opportunities and more primitive, resource-related recreational experiences in undeveloped natural settings. Visitor activities will occur under alternative C, but through the visitor use management and monitoring framework, visitor types and amounts of use will adapt to changing natural conditions such as rebraiding river channels, fluctuating water levels, seasons, or protection of sensitive habitats and nesting areas. For these reasons, alternative C, which is the preferred alternative (selected action), is the environmentally preferable alternative.

In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act requires an analysis of how each alternative meets or achieves the purposes of the act, as stated in section 101(b). For more information, please refer to the section titled, "Consistency of the Alternatives with the National Environmental Policy Act" on pages 54–56 of the CRMP/EA.

WHY THE SELECTED ACTION WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

IMPACTS THAT MAY BE BOTH BENEFICIAL AND ADVERSE

Implementing the selected action will have both long-term beneficial and adverse impacts on natural resources (water-related resources; vegetation, wildlife, and fish; threatened and endangered species; and soils), cultural resources (archeological resources, historic structures, and cultural landscapes), visitor use and experience, visual resources, park operations, and socioeconomics. The selected action will mostly have beneficial impacts, including those affecting natural, cultural, and visual resources, visitor use and experience, and the socioeconomic environment. The beneficial effects of the selected action relate to a stronger, ecosystem-based partnership approach to managing the headwaters' natural resources; the preservation of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes; the use of formal user capacity indicators and standards; scenery conservation measures; mitigation strategies for resource protection; the restoration and revegetation of social trails; the consolidation of parking areas at river access points; and expanded interpretation and education programs aimed to enhance the understanding and awareness of natural and cultural resources within the Snake River Headwaters.

Most of the adverse effects of the selected action relate to visitor use, maintenance, and short-term construction activities of trails, campsites, parking lots, and boat launch areas. However, the adverse effects of the selected action will be relatively localized to particular river access points and the existing footprint of developed areas. In addition, mitigation measures and the beneficial effects of this alternative's actions will reduce some of these adverse impacts. These impacts are not considered to be significant.

Degree of Effect on Public Health or Safety. Under the selected action, enhanced interpretive messaging, increased ranger presence, improved resource protection at sites, and modified parking and access to river segments will increase visitor safety. Overall, these actions could result in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts on visitor safety within the headwaters. Strategies vary slightly across river segments and river access points, and include the following:

- Redesigns and reconfigurations of pedestrian access trails, boat launch areas, parking areas, and overlooks will improve visitor safety by reducing congestion, road crossings, and provide increased opportunities for access to the river by a wider range of visitors with varying physical abilities.
- Education and outreach concerning bears will be enhanced to reduce negative human-wildlife interactions and increase visitor safety.
- Implementation of visitor use monitoring will assist managers in determining whether standards, such as numbers of encounters with other boaters within certain sections, are exceeded so appropriate management actions can be taken to mitigate crowding.

Unique Characteristics of the Geographic Area such as Proximity to Historic or Cultural Resources, Park Lands, Prime Farmlands, Wetlands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Ecologically Critical Areas. No actions are being proposed that will have a significant effect on or within proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. Adverse effects of the selected action relate to visitor use, maintenance, and short-term construction activities of trails, campsites, parking lots, and boat launch areas. However, the adverse effects of the selected action will be relatively localized to particular river access points and the existing footprint of developed areas. There are no prime farmlands within the Snake River Headwaters within Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. National Memorial Parkway, and the National Elk Refuge.

Degree to Which Effects on the Quality of the Human Environment Are Likely to Be Highly Controversial. The effects of the selected action on the quality of the human environment are not considered to be highly controversial. The selected action provides a practical approach to management in a manner consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which requires comprehensive planning for designated rivers to provide for the protection of the free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values. The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not receive strong public opposition to the preferred alternative management strategies beyond suggestions for minor modifications.

Although one public controversy arose during the process, it was outside the scope of the plan and was not associated with the environmental effects of the preferred alternative. During public scoping, boating advocates suggested an alternative that would have allowed nonmotorized boating on designated wild and scenic river segments where this activity is currently prohibited. The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considered but dismissed this alternative from detailed evaluation, as explained on pages 58–60 of the CRMP/EA.

Degree to Which the Possible Effects on the Quality of the Human Environment Are Highly Uncertain or Involve Unique or Unknown Risks. The selected action does not pose uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. The actions are all straightforward, and are consistent with NPS management policies, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the missions of the national park units and elk refuge. There is no uncertainty about the short- or long-term effects on the human environment or about whether the actions pose unique or unknown risks.

Degree to Which the Action May Establish a Precedent for Future Actions with Significant Effects or Represents a Decision in Principle About a Future Consideration. The selected action is consistent with the NPS Organic Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the enabling legislations of the national park units and elk refuge, and NPS management policies. The selected action will result in resource and visitor use management efforts that are consistent with law and policy. The selected action will not set any precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle that will influence future considerations.

Whether the Action is Related to Other Actions with Individually Insignificant But Cumulatively Significant Impacts. No major adverse or beneficial cumulative effects were attributed to the selected action. The selected action has the potential for minor to moderate adverse and beneficial cumulative impacts on natural resources; negligible to minor adverse cumulative impacts on cultural resources; minor to moderate adverse and beneficial cumulative impacts on visitor use and experience; minor adverse and beneficial cumulative impacts on visual resources; minor to moderate beneficial cumulative impacts to park operations; and minor to

moderate beneficial cumulative impacts to the socioeconomic environment. None of these cumulative impacts meet the threshold of a significant impact.

Degree to Which the Action May Adversely Affect Districts, Sites, Highways, Structures, or Objects Listed in the National Register of Historic Places or May Cause Loss or Destruction of Significant Scientific, Cultural, or Historical Resources. The National Park Service concluded that the selected action could result in adverse impacts on cultural resources related to unintentional visitor use impacts, such as inadvertent trampling of surface artifacts. However, these adverse effects would be barely perceptible and localized to particular river access points. None of these impacts are considered to be a significant effect. The adverse impact will neither diminish the overall integrity of the park's cultural resources nor compromise their potential for listing in the national register.

Degree to Which the Action May Adversely Affect an Endangered or Threatened Species or Its Critical Habitat. Seven federally listed and candidate species may occur within the headwaters boundary, including four mammal species, two bird species, and whitebark pine. The National Park Service determined the selected action “may affect / is not likely to adversely affect” the mammal and bird species and will have no effect on whitebark pine. Implementation of management strategies under the selected action will contribute to the beneficial cumulative effects, as well as a small amount to the adverse cumulative effects.

Whether the Action Threatens a Violation of Federal, State or Local Environmental Protection Law. The selected action does not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement for the CRMP/EA began during the scoping phase, which is an early and open process requesting the public to submit comments, concerns, and suggestions relating to the scope of project and preliminary issues. As part of public scoping, a press release was published in local and regional newspapers and 600 newsletters were mailed to stakeholders in October 2010. The newsletter was available at visitor centers in Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, and it was posted on the project's website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/snakeriver>). The newsletter announced the commencement of the planning process, identified the key components of the comprehensive river management plan, and announced the location and times of public meetings. A mail-back form was included with the newsletter and a comment form was also available on the project's website, providing an opportunity for respondents to inform the planning team on their comments. The public comment period extended from late October to December 31, 2010.

On December 7 and 8, 2010, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service hosted two joint public meetings in Jackson, Wyoming, and in Bozeman, Montana. The purpose of the meetings was to gather public input on two planning efforts—one plan for portions of the Snake River Headwaters on NPS and USFWS lands and another plan for river segments on USFS lands.

On May 6, 2013, Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and the National Elk Refuge released the Snake River Headwaters CRMP/EA for public review and comment. The availability of the CRMP/EA was announced via a press release in local and regional newspapers, NPS websites, and postcards. The CRMP/EA was distributed in hardcopy and CD format and made available locally at Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks and on the project's website. On June 4 and 5, 2013, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service hosted two joint public open houses in Moran and Jackson, Wyoming. The public was invited to submit comments on the CRMP/EA through June 30, 2013.

One hundred and sixty-six correspondences were received via direct input into the Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) system, by email, by comment card at public open houses, or as a hardcopy letter. Correspondences were received from 25 states, with the majority from Wyoming (36.7%) and Montana (10.8%). The following state agencies and nongovernmental organizations shared their comments:

- American Rivers
- American Packrafting Association
- American Whitewater
- Greater Yellowstone Coalition
- Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
- National Parks Conservation Association
- Snake River Fund
- The Governor's Office of the State of Wyoming
- Wilderness Watch
- Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality – Water Quality Division
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department

All written comments were considered during the preparation of this CRMP/EA in accordance with the requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1503). Comments allow the NPS and USFWS decision-makers to review and assess the views of other agencies, organizations, and individuals related to the preferred alternative, the other alternatives, and potential impacts.

AGENCY CONSULTATION

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and American Indian tribes was initiated by the National Park Service during public scoping in October 2010, and then reaffirmed in February 2012. Copies of the CRMP/EA were sent to these groups in May 2013 for their review and comment. The following summarizes the result of the consultation.

CONSULTATION WITH U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

Grand Teton National Park, on behalf of Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks and the National Elk Refuge, initiated informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a letter dated August 25, 2011, notifying the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the parks were in the process of developing a comprehensive river management plan for the Snake River Headwaters wild and scenic rivers. The Endangered Species Act requires in section 7(a)(2) that each federal agency, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, ensure that any action the agency authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. The parks requested a current list of federally listed plant and animal species and any designated critical habitat for such species that might occur within the designated wild and scenic river corridors in both parks.

Grand Teton National Park also notified the Wyoming Game and Fish Department that it, along with Yellowstone National Park, was in the process of developing a comprehensive river management plan for the Snake River Headwaters wild and scenic rivers in a letter dated August 25, 2011. The National Park Service requested a current list of state listed or other special status species that might occur within the designated wild and scenic river corridors in both parks.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department provided responses to these requests on October 27, 2011, and September 27, 2012, respectively. The species information provided by both agencies was used to develop the list of special status species found in “Chapter 4: The Affected Environment” of the CRMP/EA and helped frame the threatened and endangered species impact analysis found in “Chapter 5: Environmental Consequences” of the document.

To comply with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, a copy of the completed CRMP/EA was sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for review with an accompanying letter dated May 8, 2013, that summarized the determinations of effect on listed species. A copy of the document was also sent to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for their review.

Subsequently, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department provided review comments that were reflected in the document errata sheet and clarified in the responses to public comments (both attached). Also, in a letter dated August 1, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service responded by concurring with the analysis and determinations of effect for listed species. The letter confirmed that the National Park Service has fulfilled its responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, thus concluding informal consultation with the agency.

SECTION 106 CONSULTATION WITH THE WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The National Park Service notified the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office of the initiation of this comprehensive river management planning process in a letter dated February 17, 2012, inviting the office to participate in the consultation and planning process concerning the preservation management of historic properties within the wild and scenic river corridors. A copy of the CRMP/EA was sent to the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office for review and comment in accordance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In a letter dated September 5, 2013, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the National Park Service finding that the selected action will have no adverse effect on historic properties, provided the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service follow the procedures established in section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Advisory Council regulations 36 CFR Part 800 prior to any disturbance.

TRIBAL COORDINATION

Consultation with 26 American Indian tribes for this comprehensive river management plan was initiated by the National Park Service during public scoping. In letters dated June 8, 2012, Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks contacted various offices of traditionally associated tribes to invite them to consult and participate in the planning process on a government-to-government basis. Consultation with American Indian tribes is carried out in accordance with various federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies (e.g., Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments;" Executive Order 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites;" section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act).

Copies of the CRMP/EA were sent to each associated tribe for review and comment during the comment period ending June 30, 2013. Tribes had the opportunity to identify any subsequent issues or concerns, and the parks will continue to consult during implementation of the plan and as part of its ongoing commitment to maintain open tribes-NPS communications. Information and recommendations conveyed to the parks by associated tribes with regard to river management or other concerns will be considered and addressed as appropriate, and the parks will undertake measures to protect, and maintain traditional access to, culturally important resources and places.

CONCLUSION

As described above, the selected action (preferred alternative) does not constitute an action meeting the criteria that normally require preparation of an environmental impact statement. The selected action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Environmental impacts that could occur are limited in context and intensity, with generally adverse impacts that are localized and range from short- to long-term, and negligible to moderate. There are no unmitigated adverse effects on public health and safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the selected action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

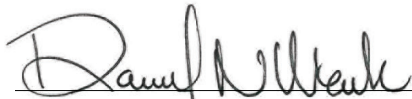
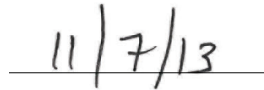
Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for this plan and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended:

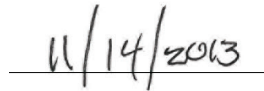
Date:



Mary Gibson Scott, Superintendent
Grand Teton National Park
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway



Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent
Yellowstone National Park



Steve Kallin, Refuge Manager
National Elk Refuge

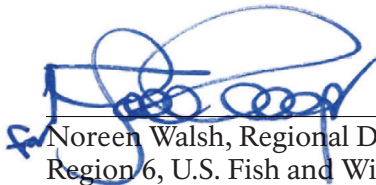
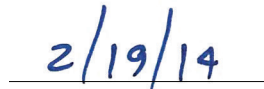


Approved:

Date:



Sue E. Masica, Regional Director
Intermountain Region, National Park Service



Noreen Walsh, Regional Director
Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wild Service



ERRATA SHEET

Corrections and revisions to the *Snake River Headwaters Comprehensive River Management Plan / Environmental Assessment* (CRMP/EA) are described in this errata sheet. Revisions were made in response to substantive comments from public and agency reviews of the CRMP/EA. A substantive comment, as defined in the *NPS Director's Order 12 Handbook* (section 4.6A), is a comment that

- questions, with a reasonable basis, the accuracy of information presented in the environmental analysis
- questions, with a reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analysis
- presents reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the environmental analysis
- causes changes or revisions in the proposal

As further stated in Director's Order 12, substantive comments "raise, debate, or question a point of fact or policy. Comments in favor of or against the proposed action, alternatives, or comments that only agree or disagree with NPS policy are not considered substantive."

The following concern statements have been developed to summarize similar comments, and representative quotes are included from original letters received from the public and agencies. Representative quotes are a select subset or sampling of comments taken directly from the correspondence to illustrate the issue, concern, or idea expressed by the comments grouped under that concern statement. Typically, only those comments considered to be substantive are analyzed and used to create concern statements and responses. In addition, some nonsubstantive comments that were identified as being of high importance to the public or needing clarification are included.

Revisions that were made to the CRMP/EA in response to public and agency comments have not resulted in substantial modification of the preferred alternative (selected action). It has been determined that the revisions do not require additional environmental analysis. The page numbers that are referenced below and summarized at the end of this errata sheet are from the CRMP/EA.

NPS AND USFWS RESPONSES TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Management Alternatives

Concern Statement 1:

Commenters supported the preferred alternative (alternative C) largely due to its emphasis on protection of natural resources. Organizations and businesses that expressed this view included, but are not limited to, American Rivers, Barker-Ewing Scenic Tours Inc., National Parks Conservation Association, Signal Mountain Lodge, Snake River Fund, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, and Wilderness Watch. The governor of Wyoming expressed support for alternative B, stating that it can better accommodate increased recreational demand. While not opposing the preferred alternative, others suggested modifications to this alternative, which are addressed under more specific concern statements within the river segments and river access points sections.

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality – Water Quality Division

Representative Quote (Correspondence 106):

“The WQD would like to commend the NPS for the detailed analysis and disclosure of the impacts of the alternatives on water resources. We agree that the preferred alternative will provide the best protections to water quality.”

Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Representative Quote (Correspondence 141):

“GYC finds that the assessment of alternatives is complete and that the environmentally preferred alternative (Alternative C) is the most adequate for protecting the river resources and the values for which they are determined “outstandingly remarkable.” In our view, additional alternatives are unnecessary as a full range of alternatives has been considered. In particular NPS appropriately considered and dismissed a need to fully analyze the impacts of increased recreational boating use on NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) portions of the designated Snake Headwaters. The need for an increase in recreational use is outside of the scope of congressional mandates in developing a CRMP for multiple reasons. First, substantial preexisting boating opportunities are allowed throughout the Snake Headwaters and are addressed in improving recreational opportunities and maintaining ORV’s on both National Forest Segments and for within the NPS and National Elk Refuge (NER) portions of the CRMP.”

Governor Matthew Mead, State of Wyoming

Representative Quote (Correspondence 165):

“I support Alternative B and ask the National Park Service to reconsider its preferred alternative (Alternative C). As stated in the draft CRMP, ‘Alternatives B and C protect the free-flowing condition and water quality of the designated wild and scenic rivers through monitoring and evaluating water resource projects to ensure consistency with the wild and scenic river designation.’ (Pg. 52). Both Alternatives B and C protect the ‘free-flowing condition and water quality.’ Alternative B has the needed flexibility to adjust for increased recreational interest if there is demand for this and it has no additional adverse effect.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

It should be noted the preferred alternative (alternative C) has the needed flexibility to adjust to increased recreational demand. Under both alternatives B and C, a variety of management tools could be adaptively used to manage visitor use and protect resources. Furthermore, maximum use levels for alternative C allow for increased recreation use up to current peak use levels on some river segments (see table 7).

Additionally, as summarized on page 173 of the CRMP/EA, there would be additional adverse effects on natural resources under alternative B, as compared to alternative C.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR RIVER SEGMENTS

Concern Statement 1:

Commenters offered suggestions to river segment management strategies including, but not limited to, additional mitigation and monitoring strategies, integrating in-stream flows and watershed connectivity, and adding analysis of grizzly/human conflicts.

Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Representative Quotes (Correspondence 141):

“For the discussion of all river segments within the NPS portion of the CRMP which is core grizzly bear habitat, we ask for specific protections be made to promote avoidance of conflicts with grizzly bears. River corridors in the Snake Headwaters are critical for movement and dispersal areas for grizzly bears and an analysis of human-bear conflicts would show that areas prone to conflict are in these riparian corridors. We ask for visitor use signs identifying the importance of ecosystem function connecting grizzly bears to cutthroat trout and the importance of trophic cascades. Additionally, bear safety should be a key component of Snake Headwaters management and CRMP with considerations for visitor use, designated campsites, and dispersed camping... Analysis of grizzly bear conflicts, proactive conflict prevention, and increased visitor awareness in the Snake Headwaters is critical for protecting this ORV.

“It would benefit the CRMP to break down specific future monitoring by river segment with a focus on specific unique ORV’s and future threats. For example, Pacific Creek should have increased monitoring capacity for water quality because of potential threats listed in the Bridger-Teton National Forest EA, in the form of placer mining and vacant (but not permanently closed) cattle grazing allotments...”

American Rivers

Representative Quote (Correspondence 161):

“Gros Ventre River- Scenic segment in National Elk Refuge and GTNP (pp.125–127)

“Types/amounts of development: Social trails would be removed and revegetated. No new developments would be proposed. [Suggestion] The Park Service and Refuge should investigate opportunities to bolster instream flows below Kelly by altering irrigation infrastructure.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

As highlighted in the “Headwaters-wide Management Strategies” section of “Chapter 3: The Alternatives,” the CRMP/EA includes a wide variety of management strategies that focus on wildlife habitat (including grizzly bear behavior), fisheries, vegetation, free-flowing condition, and water quality, to name a few (see pages 71–73). Interagency cooperation is also stressed as an important strategy for resource management. These overarching management strategies apply to all segments and will be used by park and refuge staff throughout the implementation of this plan.

The use of resource monitoring and adaptive management tools is another prominent element of the CRMP/EA (see pages 83–95). These strategies will be more site-specific and/or issue-specific than the overarching headwaters-wide strategies. Via the use of indicators and standards for specific river segments, a wide variety of natural resource values will be closely monitored over time in order to maintain acceptable conditions. As needed, appropriate management responses to the condition will be implemented. The monitoring guidelines are described on pages 51–52.

As described in the chapter 3 section titled, “Mitigation Measures Common to All Action Alternatives,” the CRMP/EA also includes a broad set of best management practices for mitigating or avoiding impacts on park and refuge resources from disturbances related to visitor use, potential future park and refuge operations, and other park and refuge developments.

Through the use of headwaters-wide management strategies, indicators and standards, and mitigation measures, the CRMP/EA will ensure that resources are protected throughout the implementation of the plan.

Regarding bear management, the above strategies of the CRMP/EA will minimize the potential for grizzly bear conflicts with park visitors and maintain unhindered grizzly bear movement and behavior throughout the various segments. It should also be noted that the USFWS concurs with the determination of effect for grizzly bears stated in the CRMP/EA (under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act) as “*may affect, not likely to adversely affect.*”

In addition to the CRMP/EA management guidance, Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks also implement parkwide management strategies, programs, and practices that aim to protect grizzly bear habitat and movement corridors, and protect individual bears and people by reducing the potential for conflicts. The National Park Service promotes grizzly bear conservation through visitor awareness, proactive conflict prevention, and protection of important grizzly bear habitat. Grizzly bear-human conflicts often lead to human-caused bear mortality. Preventing bears from obtaining anthropogenic foods is the foundation of the NPS strategy for reducing grizzly bear-human conflicts. The grizzly bear management programs currently being implemented by the parks have been highly effective at minimizing bear-human conflicts and human-caused bear mortality.

Given the substantial bear management efforts already in place, the National Park Service does not believe it is necessary to add specific new actions or procedures for the Snake River CRMP/EA, but will continue to use the practices in place as needed to inform, educate, monitor, and enforce human behaviors within the designated wild and scenic river corridors to minimize bear-human conflicts.

Regarding the maintenance of in-stream flows on the Gros Ventre River, the National Park Service is working within the park boundary to improve in-stream flows downstream from the town of Kelly, Wyoming. The National Park Service does not maintain or use any irrigation infrastructure below Kelly, but will continue to work with partners on best practices to maintain flows in the Gros Ventre River to protect park values. Although outside the scope of the CRMP/EA, the most recent action toward this goal was the removal of the Kelly-Newbold Dam, a diversion dam structure transferred to Grand Teton National Park through past land acquisitions.

Concern Statement 2:

Commenters had varying opinions about River Road access within Grand Teton National Park. Some suggested that it be closed now to improve the scenic quality of the river and visitor safety; others asked it stay open permanently for ease of access. Other commenters agreed with the preferred alternative to keep River Road open until it deteriorates due to natural migration of the river channel.

Barker-Ewing Scenic Tours, Inc.

Representative Quote (Correspondence 119):

“Overall, I do support the preferred option (# C), with a few adjustments. First of all, I strongly recommend closing the River Road (between the Bar BC road and the RKO road) to all motorized traffic. As the Snake River from the Jackson Lake Dam to just past Moose Village is designated as ‘Scenic’ in the Wild & Scenic River Act, I think we need to keep the river banks as free of vehicles as possible. It is one thing to have a road that only follows the river for a short distance to access the river (for rafters, fishing, artists, photographers, etc.), it is quite another to have a road follow along the river for miles, disrupting the scenic aspect of that stretch of river, as well as further impacting wildlife in that area. In addition, the west bank of the river is slowly being eroded to the point that the River road is becoming increasingly unsafe for motorized vehicles. I would hate to have an RV or other camper or even a single vehicle filled with people plummet off the embankment when the bank gives way causing major injuries and potentially deaths.”

Grand Teton Lodge Company**Representative Quote (Correspondence 139):**

“In regards to the RKO Road, the plan states the road will remain open until natural processes take over. In assuming this is due to the bank being likely to collapse, we would like to see the road repaired and remain open. The RKO Road is a historical part of Grand Teton National Park, and we would like to see it stay open for visitors to utilize. We would also like to see it stay open for training purposes of our rafting operation and an option for being able to hike guests out on windy trips, etc.”

National Parks Conservation Association**Representative Quote (Correspondence 116):**

“NPCA supports the plans in the CRMP to keep the River Road open for public use as road conditions allow, while allowing the road to deteriorate in the future if natural migration of the Snake River channel occurs. Although, bike riding and sightseeing along the road allow for the enjoyment of park visitors, maintaining the natural flow of the river should be the dominant management priority.”

NPS Response:

The National Park Service recognizes vehicular use of the River Road has previously been a customary means of access for visitors to drive along the Snake River, for commercial outfitters to drive customers along the river, and to facilitate the transport of gear and equipment for river use. However, this portion of the Snake River experiences very active natural braiding processes, which can greatly alter river channels and banks, in turn affecting the stability of River Road.

Under the preferred alternative, River Road will remain open to vehicles as road conditions warrant. Grand Teton National Park will only close the road to public vehicle use in the future if portions of the road fail due to the natural migration of the Snake River and road repairs cannot be accomplished without impact to adjacent sagebrush and other sensitive habitats. Pedestrians will continue to be able to use the road even if it is closed to vehicular traffic. Public vehicular access will also continue to be allowed on RKO and Bar BC roads, which provide access to the north and south ends of River Road.

The Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2008 and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act both emphasize protection of free-flowing character and water quality. Any future construction activity regarding the road within the river will undergo a section 7 analysis pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Grand Teton National Park also plans to complete determinations of eligibility for potential historic roads within the park that have not yet been evaluated, including the RKO, Bar BC, and River Roads. The National Park Service has already initiated consultation with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, as required under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, on the effects of preferred alternatives on cultural resources. However, the fact that a property may be eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places does not determine how it is managed with regard to public use and access.

Management Strategies for River Access Points**Concern Statement 1:**

Commenters suggested alterations to proposed management strategies of river access points within Grand Teton National Park for various reasons including, but not limited to, protecting natural river processes and scenic views, reducing congestion at and maintenance of launch points,

reducing wildlife-human interactions, improving enforcement of rules and regulations, and improving overall visitor access and experience.

Barker-Ewing Scenic Tours, Inc.

Representative Quote (Correspondence 119):

"I believe the Deadman's Bar launch could be improved with the primary launch site (launch slips/ramps) being relocated upstream roughly 150 - 200 yards. The bank there has been extremely stable historically and would most likely require much less maintenance to keep the slips clear of silt buildup (less dredging). These ramps/slips could be designated for commercial use (raft and fish concessioners), while leaving the current slips available for private rafters/fishermen. That would help to alleviate the congestion that can occur at the Deadman's Bar site. In addition, there needs to be ample parking at the Deadman's Bar area to accommodate all the use that is currently allowed there."

Grand Teton Lodge Company

Representative Quote (Correspondence 139):

"Moose Landing: Preferred Alternative C calls for expanding one or both ramps. We would like to see a designation of launch and takeout ramps to help with congestion of this highly utilized area. In conjunction with the ramp expansion and protection of the bank, we would like to ensure the continued use of the hoist system for takeout of Sweep boats."

Individual Commenter

Representative Quote (Correspondence 158):

"Some combination of alternatives B and C would be best for Moose Landing. This is one of the more heavily used access points along the Snake in Jackson Hole, yet the facilities are probably the worst. A ramp with an eddy needs to be built, allowing for safe landing in high water and ample room for the public and outfitters. The area identified in alternative C (upgrading or extending the existing ramps) might be too narrow to accomplish the task. One suggestion would be to extend the back parking lot (north of HQ) to the river; most of the trees in this vicinity along the bank already have been killed by rotary snow plowing. I'd like to see a more detailed design process, with an opportunity for the public to give input."

Snake River Fund

Representative Quotes (Correspondence 118):

"Regarding Pacific Creek improvements, we support Alternative B, which proposes relocation of the ramp. Due to the placement of the current ramp below the inflow of Pacific Creek, significant annual maintenance is required to remove sediment deposited by the creek. With current budget constraints, the public cannot be assured that needed maintenance will be performed on a regular basis. Relocation of the ramp above the confluence would require a significant initial capital investment, but with less required maintenance, costs would be recovered over time, and would result in a higher functioning ramp."

"...for boat ramps with a high volume of commercial use, please consider providing separate areas for commercial and private users. Separate ramp areas would facilitate better traffic flow, improve efficiency, and reduce conflict."

Individual Commenter

Representative Quote (Correspondence 136):

"Alt. C Modified: Re-locate the [Cattleman's Bridge] parking and non-flush toilet to the north (closer to the highway) and move the primitive boat launch north into the cove and out of site of"

the Oxbow Bend Overlooks. Site the parking lot and boat launch to minimize the portage distance between parking and the boat launch.”

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Representative Quote (Correspondence 166):

“Schwabacher Landing - This site is located in the Jackson sage-grouse core area. Any proposed new surface disturbance associated with the alternatives should be assessed using the Density Disturbance Calculation Tool (DDCT) process as described in Executive Order 2011-5. New development and reclamation should comply with Executive Order 2011-5 stipulations for development as outline in Attachment B.

“Pacific Creek Landing – ‘Major’ adverse impacts in this section may be overstated. The definition of ‘major’ states ‘population numbers, genetic variability, and other demographic factors for species might experience substantial changes. . .loss of habitat might affect the viability of at least some native species.’ Building <1mi of road and a boat ramp do not seem as though they could cause the level of impact described above for any terrestrial species occurring there, especially since the impacts are localized. Suggest that ‘moderate’ is more appropriate. If there is a terrestrial species that will be affected at the population level, it should be cited.”

NPS Response:

During development of the CRMP/EA, Grand Teton National Park consulted with professional hydrologists, geomorphologists, landscape architects, civil engineers, and recreation specialists who evaluated each river access point and provided recommendations for improvement. The National Park Service believes the preferred alternative provides the best means of addressing long-standing design issues to enhance resource conditions and improve access and circulation for visitors.

At Deadman’s Bar, subject matter experts did not believe moving the existing launch upstream a short distance would significantly improve conditions or the need for periodic maintenance. Moving the existing launch would require significant site renovation and disturbance, alteration of the existing road entry and parking lot; therefore, this alternative was not advanced.

As noted in the CRMP/EA, the proposed design improvements at Moose Landing will require adaptive management and regular maintenance due to the dynamic nature of the river in this location. Additional future actions may need to consider elements from alternative B in order to find the most effective long-term strategy for this site.

Regarding Pacific Creek Landing, the environmental and fiscal costs associated with relocating the ramp above the Pacific Creek-Snake River confluence would not out-weigh the benefits. The potential new road and access location is limited because of the considerable steepness of the river bank upstream from Pacific Creek. The new site would also result in impacts on wildlife habitat and cultural sites within this undisturbed area. Regarding the impacts of relocating Pacific Creek Landing described in the CRMP/EA, the use of the term “major impact” is to be considered in the context of being “localized.” At a localized level, substantial alteration and displacement of native vegetation and habitat would be expected in the vicinity of the relocated landing facilities. The National Park Service considers this level of displacement a major adverse impact, albeit localized. Although the “major” threshold definition for the Vegetation, Wildlife, and Fish impact topic includes metrics that relate to potential changes in species populations, genetic variability, and species viability, the localized nature of the anticipated impact precludes these elements from applying in this case.

Regarding Cattle's Bridge, one commenter suggested modifying the locations of the parking area, toilet, and boat launch under the preferred alternative in order to reduce visibility from the Oxbow Bend Overlooks and to minimize the portage distance between the parking lot and boat launch. It should be noted that the river access point designs presented in the CRMP/EA are conceptual in nature and their exact on-the-ground locations may vary to reduce potential impacts on river resources and related visitor experiences. Furthermore, as described on pages 76 and 78 of the CRMP/EA, scenery conservation measures and development guidelines will also be used to allow appropriate kinds and amounts of recreation use while protecting river values.

Regarding Schwabacher Landing, the National Park Service (while not explicitly required to follow a state executive order) will continue to follow the intent of the State of Wyoming Executive Order 2011-5 in managing sage grouse and their habitat in core areas. The net result of the preferred alternative will be to reduce disturbance in the Schwabacher Landing area by following best management practices in evaluating and maintaining sage grouse habitat.

One commenter suggested that separate areas for commercial and private users at river access points would facilitate better traffic flow, improve efficiency, and reduce conflict. The National Park Service believes that design improvements at the river access points will reduce localized crowding and improve access and circulation for visitors. However, if standards for crowding-related indicators are exceeded, a variety of adaptive management tools could be implemented to better distribute use, such as separate launches for commercial and private boaters at high-use access points.

Jackson Lake Dam

Concern Statement1:

Commenters, including the National Parks Conservation Association, expressed support for continued collaboration between the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation. Another commenter felt the CRMP/EA should not analyze the influence of the dam on the Snake River.

Barker, Rosholt & Simpson LLP

Representative Quote (Correspondence 159):

"The Services have no authority to evaluate the operations of the dam or assess what alleged influence it has on the Snake River (scenic segment). The statements should be removed accordingly."

National Parks Conservation Association

Representative Quote (Correspondence 116):

"Looking to the future, we urge the NPS to continue to work closely with the Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec) to address their important role in the operation of the Jackson Lake Dam. Even though the bureau strives to mimic natural flows through the dam, artificially controlled releases still have impacts on the river qualities. The BuRec plays a significant role in maintaining a more natural flow of the river and releasing water in a way so as to avoid large fluctuations in flow that alter the river's natural dynamics."

NPS and USFWS Response:

The Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act specifically stated that "Nothing in this section shall affect the management and operation of Jackson Lake or Jackson Lake Dam, including the

storage, management, and release of water.” However, this does not preclude collaboration with the Bureau of Reclamation or an assessment of the dam’s effects on the Snake River. The partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation is noted in the “Headwaters-wide Management Strategies” section of the CRMP/EA (pages 76–77).

The effects of actions related to Jackson Lake Dam operations (e.g., water releases) are germane to this CRMP/EA planning project in the form of cumulative impact analysis, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. As noted on page 252, the Council on Environmental Quality defines cumulative impacts as, “the impacts that result from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions.” As a result, per CEQ guidance, the Jackson Lake Dam operation is included in the cumulative impact scenario description on pages 252–254 of the CRMP/EA. Likewise, the cumulative effects from Jackson Lake Dam operations are included in the impact analyses for various impact topics.

Concern Statement 2:

A commenter stated the Jackson Lake Dam river access point is not within boundaries of the designation and therefore all analysis and proposed actions for the boat launch should be removed from the plan.

Barker, Rosholt & Simpson LLP

Representative Quote (Correspondence 159):

“Throughout the analysis of the alternatives the Services admit that the boat launch at Jackson Lake Dam ‘is not technically within the wild and scenic river corridor.’ The Services’ analysis and proposed action at this site is prohibited and should be removed. Although the Services recognize they would have to coordinate with Reclamation on any proposal, the site is not within the boundaries of the designation and has no part in this plan. Further, although the site may be used to access the Snake River (scenic segment); it is not within the designation approved by Congress. The Services should not analyze or propose actions outside the boundaries of the respective designations.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

Although the river access point near Jackson Lake Dam is just above the wild and scenic river corridor, the NPS and USFWS have a responsibility to take a holistic look at visitor use within the river corridor. As noted on page 46 of the CRMP/EA, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires that river management plans address user capacities. User capacities refer to quantity and mixture of recreational and other public use that can be permitted without adverse impact on the resource values of the river area. The boat launch below Jackson Lake Dam provides access for visitors that are using the river corridor, and therefore management strategies associated with this river access point and its corresponding effects on the river corridor have been included as part of the scope of this planning effort.

Concern Statement 3:

There was confusion over the meaning of the term “free-flowing” as used in the CRMP/EA. A commenter requested agencies remove the description of “free-flowing” from the Snake River (scenic segment) because the flow of the Snake River is influenced by releases from the Jackson Lake Dam.

Barker, Rosholt & Simpson LLP

Representative Quote (Correspondence 159):

“Further, the Plan should emphasize and highlight in all sections, that the Snake River (scenic segment) is not a ‘free-flowing’ river. Despite the scenic river designation, the Snake Headwaters Act recognizes that Jackson Lake Dam stores, manages, and releases water. The Act further mandates that nothing can affect those water storage operations. Accordingly, since the designation does not include Jackson Lake Dam or the reservoir itself, the Plan should be clarified to acknowledge this important and unique feature relative to the other designated river segments.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

In the context of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the term “free-flowing” is correctly used in the CRMP/EA for the Snake River scenic segment (downstream of the Jackson Lake Dam). The act defines “free-flowing” as “flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, riprapping, or other modification of the waterway.” This definition of “free-flowing” under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is noted on page 13 in the section titled “Background for the Planning Effort” in chapter 1 (in the subsection titled “Free-flowing Condition”).

In the context of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, “free-flowing” does not refer to the flows that are altered by upstream water storage and releases (e.g., from Jackson Lake in this case). Instead it refers to the lack of physical riverbank modifications and channel diversions or impoundments along the river segment.

Boating on Closed River Segments

Concern Statement 1:

The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received opposing comments regarding the dismissal of an alternative that would have changed the longstanding regulations within Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks and the National Elk Refuge that currently prohibit nonmotorized boating on certain river segments.

Commenters offered a number of arguments supporting the dismissal including:

1. There are already appropriate levels of nonmotorized boating use allowed in the parks, and there are a number of opportunities for nonmotorized boating on river segments within National Forests that are located outside of NPS and USFWS boundaries.
2. The preexisting regulations in place at the time the river segments were designated contributed to the values for which the river segments were designated.
3. WSRAs designations should not alter the regulations in place at the time of designation, which protected park and refuge resources.
4. The wild, scenic, and recreational qualities of the river segments covered by the CRMP/EA would be significantly impacted by increasing or modifying use.

A number of other commenters urged the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reconsider its dismissal of this alternative in order to allow this activity on the closed river segments covered by the plan. Commenters made the following assertions:

1. The historic regulations prohibiting nonmotorized boating on certain river segments were originally enacted as an indirect limit on fishing, not in any response to impacts associated with

- boating, and there is no evidence that boating would substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of the designated rivers.
2. The dismissal of this alternative incorrectly analyzed the percentage of river miles open to and ideal for certain types of nonmotorized boating.
 3. With proper management and monitoring, nonmotorized boating on closed river segments could be allowed and would be environmentally sustainable.
 4. Because the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service dismissed packrafting from the CRMP/EA, the goals of the plan cannot be met.
 5. An alternative cannot be dismissed solely because analysis would not be cheap, easy, or would produce an outcome not favored by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or merely because it conflicts with existing regulations.

Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Representative Quote (Correspondence 141):

“GYC finds that the assessment of alternatives is complete and that the environmentally preferred alternative (Alternative C) is the most adequate for protecting the river resources and the values for which they are determined ‘outstandingly remarkable.’ In our view, additional alternatives are unnecessary as a full range of alternatives has been considered. In particular NPS appropriately considered and dismissed a need to fully analyze the impacts of increased recreational boating use on NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) portions of the designated Snake Headwaters. The need for an increase in recreational use is outside of the scope of congressional mandates in developing a CRMP for multiple reasons. First, substantial preexisting boating opportunities are allowed throughout the Snake Headwaters and are addressed in improving recreational opportunities and maintaining ORV’s on both National Forest Segments and for within the NPS and National Elk Refuge (NER) portions of the CRMP.

“Long-standing restrictions on NPS and USFWS-NER river segments contributed to the values that these river segments were designated. The wild, scenic, and recreational qualities of these river stretches would be significantly impacted by increasing or modifying use of the resource post-designation when this character is precisely what enabled designation. Second, changing regulations would be in direct conflict with existing regulations that manage or prohibit boating on protected river segments in Yellowstone National Park (YNP), Grand Teton National Park (GTNP), and the NER.

“Thirdly, we agree that the intent of the act and of a river designation under the WSRA is to enhance existing protection and therefore it should not alter preexisting regulations that protected parked and refuge resources. For these rivers, the long-standing boating restrictions have protected and contributed to the ORV’s that enabled their designation. Our members and supporters greatly value the existing wildlife, fish, and wilderness values which these restrictions protect and those values would be impaired with increases in recreational boating.”

Individual Commenter

Representative Quote (Correspondence 64):

“As a paddler and whitewater boater for over 35 years . . . I wholeheartedly support alternative C and support limiting human access and use as needed to maintain the highly precious solitude, wilderness values and wilderness character of these areas. Some may say that paddling is a no or low impact sport. Paddlers who are honest about it know that nonmotorized boating has real impacts. Please consider human waste issues, repeated use and compaction and other impacts at scenic rest stops along rivers, disturbance to wildlife, and impacts to other people like myself who do not want to hear boaters whooping it up or see brightly colored boaters floating some of the last stretches of river untouched by boaters. I don’t

want to see boaters bathing or making and using swimming holes along these rivers! Aside from the obvious differences, adding paddling to these rivers would be like adding new trails, many of the same impacts are associated with both activities. These new impacts would be additive to existing impacts from other park visitors.”

American Whitewater

Representative Quotes (Correspondence 72):

“Banning boating to prevent overfishing is an unnecessary, outdated, and arbitrary management tool. The Parks no longer need to bar citizens who want to float the rivers within their borders to protect fisheries.

“It is arbitrary and capricious for the CRMP to claim that paddling could impact the river values given the strict monitoring and standards. If an impact began to occur it would quickly be recognized, documented, and remedied through common management actions. But increased adverse impacts are virtually impossible under this CRMP, whether a visitor chooses to paddle, fish, or hike.

“‘CEQ is also clear that agencies should not pare the list down to only those alternatives that are cheap, easy, or your park’s favorite approach.’ This is precisely the error that the CRMP makes in eliminating paddling alternatives in part because analyzing them, in the view of the Park, would not be cheap, easy, or produce an outcome favored by the Parks. Thus, excluding paddling from alternatives for the stated reason violates mandatory NPS Policy, NEPA and the APA.

“Regardless, even if the NPS continues to assert that paddling is not a component of the recreation ORV, the standard for limiting a non-ORV use under the WSRA is substantial interference with public use and enjoyment of the values. The substantial interference standard is an extremely high bar. The CRMP, however, offers absolutely no evidence that paddling would substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of the values.”

American Packrafting Association

Representative Quotes (Correspondence 40):

“...the sub-section on ‘Existing Restrictions’ makes the point that 351 miles of the total 410 miles (86%) of designated rivers are open to non-motorized boating, and that the remaining 14% provide opportunities to experience the river environment without recreational watercraft. . . [A] total of 57% of the newly designated river miles that are not ideal for packrafting (the ideal territory for packrafting is remote and away from roads). Of the remaining 176 miles of river (43%), only 5 miles are available for remote wilderness packraft trips on Park lands.

“Goal #4 on page 30 of the CRMP reads, ‘Provide a diversity of opportunities and settings for visitors of varying abilities to experience, learn about, and have a direct connection with the rivers and their associated values.’ By dismissing packrafting from inclusion in the CRMP, Goal #4 will not be realized because packrafters comprise a valid and nationally recognized and established user group falling well within a subset of diverse activities fostering a direct connection with rivers.”

Individual Commenter

Representative Quote (Correspondence 5):

“Furthermore, there are creative ways to manage such situations to minimize any potential conflict between river users and wildlife usage. Seasonal closures, for example, are commonly

used to protect spawning salmon. This type of solution is well within reason for these stretches, and at the very least should be evaluated further.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The NPS and USFWS dismissed an alternative that would have allowed nonmotorized boating on designated wild and scenic river segments where this use is not authorized because it is outside the scope of the plan and thus does not satisfy the purpose and need for the CRMP/EA. Such an action would conflict with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge, it would conflict with more restrictive existing regulations that were in place at the time the wild and scenic river segments were designated, and substantial boating opportunities already exist throughout the Snake River Headwaters.

The purpose of the CRMP/EA is to protect and enhance the ORVs, free-flowing condition, and water quality for seven designated wild and scenic rivers covered by the plan. Evaluation of parkwide regulations and river segments that are not part of the wild and scenic rivers designation would unnecessarily expand the scope of the plan and require consideration of additional issues and environmental impacts on a parkwide scale. The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service believe that the current scope of the plan is appropriate, allows the agencies to meet their goals, and also allows the agencies to meet their obligations under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

One commenter presented an alternative approach to analyze the river miles ideal for packrafting, a type of nonmotorized boating. Another suggested that there might be ways to manage nonmotorized boating on currently closed river segments in a way that could minimize impacts on park resources. However, these factors do not alter the analysis as to whether such an alternative would be reasonable because changes to the existing regulations are still outside the scope of the CRMP/EA.

Finally, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service note that this alternative was not dismissed because it would be difficult or expensive to analyze, would produce an outcome that is not favored by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or solely because it conflicts with existing regulations; it was dismissed for the reasons stated above, which are further elaborated upon in the CRMP/EA.

Concern Statement 2:

Regarding dismissal of an alternative that would have changed the longstanding parkwide and refugewide regulations that currently prohibit nonmotorized boating on certain river segments, commenters expressed concern that the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service erred in concluding that nonmotorized boating conflicts with refuge and park missions or policies and erred in concluding that the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act suggest nonmotorized boating should not be allowed on Wild and Scenic Rivers. Commenters also asserted that the agencies incorrectly interpreted section 10(a) and 10(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in its dismissal. One commenter asserted that not allowing nonmotorized boating on all sections of the Snake River Headwaters violates the NPS Organic Act.

American Whitewater

Representative Quotes (Correspondence 72):

“The Craig Thomas Snake River Headwaters Act also is clear that paddling is part of the Recreational ORV on the WSRs. The Act states:

FINDINGS--Congress finds that-- the rivers and streams of the headwaters of the Snake River System...provide unparalleled fishing, hunting, boating, and other recreational activities for local residents and millions of visitors from around the world... (emphasis added)(§ 5002 (b)(1).)

“In addition to clearly placing boating among the unparalleled recreational values, the Craig Thomas Snake River Headwaters Act states one of the primary purposes of the Act is to ‘ensure that future generations of citizens of the United States enjoy the benefits of the rivers and streams of the headwaters of the Snake River System.’ These benefits certainly include river recreation, and river recreation certainly includes paddling. The Act further affirms that the Act will celebrate the ORV’s of these rivers while ‘preserving public access to those rivers and streams.’

“The CRMP wrongly claims that boating would ‘conflict with the National Elk Refuge purpose and the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRF) mission.’ (CRMP 60.)

“The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is ‘to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.’

“The CRMP offers no evidence whatsoever that paddling would be inconsistent with this mission.

“The CRMP erroneously claims that ‘long-standing [paddling] restrictions protect and contribute to the values for which these particular rivers were designated; thus, eliminating these restrictions would be inconsistent with the purpose of this planning effort.’ (CRMP 58.)

“This claim is made under Section 10(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act which states:

Each component of the wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values.

“Recreation is a value that led to designation on the WSR’s, and river access and use—including paddling—is explicitly stated as a value in the Snake River Headwaters Act. (See also Section 8 of these comments.) The NPS, in managing recreation, is charged with promoting river-related forms of recreation. It is arbitrary and capricious to state that paddling should be excluded from the range of river-related forms of recreation that should be promoted simply because an unsupported policy has previously banned paddling. The WSRA does not freeze use types and capacities at the time of designation, and in claiming it does the CRMP conveys a deep misunderstanding of the Act.

“Section 10(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) states that:

The lands involved shall be subject to the provisions of the chapter and the Acts under which the national park system or national wildlife system, as the case may be, is administered, and in the case of conflict between the provisions of this chapter and such Acts, the more restrictive provisions shall apply (16 USC § 1281(c)).

“The CRMP argues that Section 10(c) of the WSRG grants priority to the 1950’s regulations that prohibit paddling over the entirety of the WSRG. This is not the case. Section 10(c) grants priority to the ‘Acts’ under which the National Park System and Wildlife Refuge System are administered. An ‘Act’ in this legal context is an Act of the US Congress, in other words, legislation passed by Congress and signed into law by the President. The NPS regulations that prohibit paddling are not ‘Acts,’ they are merely regulations and are thus are not contemplated by Section 10(c) of the WSRG.”

Individual Commenter

Representative Quote (Correspondence 43):

“Below I have outlined two quotes from YOUR document I feel you are strongly in violation of. I suggest you remember these laws were put in place to protect the land, but not excessively at the expense of it being hidden from the public.

Congress has charged the National Park Service with managing the lands under its stewardship ‘in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations’ (NPS Organic Act, 16 USC 1). pg.96

“By limiting the public’s access to these rivers you are ‘leaving them unimpaired,’ however there is no ‘enjoyment of future or current generations.’”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The commenters’ interpretation of the dismissal language in the CRMP/EA is incorrect. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did conclude that recreational boating on the Gros Ventre River would conflict with the “wildlife first” mandate of the National Wildlife Refuge System, for the reasons stated on page 60 of the CRMP/EA. But the National Park Service did not conclude that nonmotorized boating generally conflicts with park missions or policies. In fact, nonmotorized boating is appropriate in areas where it is currently allowed. However, nothing in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act suggest that previously prohibited forms of boating should be allowed on newly designated wild and scenic rivers.

The CRMP/EA explains on pages 58–60 why recreational boating on closed river segments is not a reasonable alternative, and is not required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or the Craig Thomas Snake River Headwaters Act.

While the National Park Service agrees that public use and enjoyment is part of the fundamental mandate of NPS units, the suggestion that the NPS Organic Act mandates some particular level or location for nonmotorized boating use is incorrect.

Concern Statement 3:

Commenters stated the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service failed to conduct a user capacity analysis related to boating.

American Whitewater

Representative Quote (Correspondence 72):

“In addition to violations of agency policies and NEPA, the CRMP also violates the Administrative Procedures Act (APA)... Here, NPS has failed to follow through on its NEPA obligations as defined in the DO-12 Handbook and the 2006 Management Policies. It has failed to actually conduct a relevant user capacity analysis related to boating. Most importantly, it has failed to seriously consider boating, and has rejected it based solely on an existing regulation that bears little relation to the current management objectives of the NPS.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

Nothing in NEPA, the *DO-12 Handbook*, *NPS Management Policies 2006*, or the Administrative Procedures Act addresses user capacity analysis for boating specifically. The only relevant requirement is section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. § 1274(d)), which simply states that a CRMP shall “address . . . user capacities.” The CRMP/EA does this.

The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifically analyzed user capacity in the CRMP/EA for segments where certain recreational uses, including nonmotorized boating, are allowed. As discussed on pages 58–60 of the CRMP/EA, the National Park Service considered but dismissed from detailed NEPA analysis an alternative that would have allowed nonmotorized boating on river segments where such use is currently prohibited. Nothing in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act suggests that any further “address[ing of] user capacities” is needed in such a situation.

User Capacity**Concern Statement 1:**

Commenters expressed their lack of support for the user capacity component in the plan. Some commenters felt it unreasonable to set maximum use levels for each river segment near current peak use levels. Those commenters believe river use may increase during the life of the plan and that river outstandingly remarkable values can withstand higher use levels.

American Whitewater**Representative Quote (Correspondence 72):**

“The CRMP offers no evidence or rationale indicating that additional visitors would impact the values for which the rivers were designated. By the NPS's own admission the supposed ‘maximums’ presented in the CRMP are actual a ‘low’ level of use and not a true maximum. The CRMP thus fails to meet the legal mandate for a visitor capacity analysis by not discussing and dealing with maximum numbers of visitors.”

Governor Matthew Mead, State of Wyoming**Representative Quote (Correspondence 165):**

“Baseline data must be gathered where previous data does not exist or is not current. Monitoring will indicate if any changes are occurring in and along the river. These changes cannot be put in context or form the basis of sound decisions without a foundation — baseline data is critical. A specific illustration is user capacity. While there is legal precedence for determinations on user capacity of river segments, I am concerned there is little analysis of current use levels or consideration of whether use levels could be greater. This flexibility is important to Wyoming and to meeting the intent of the Legacy Act. It is possible to preserve both outstandingly remarkable value and increased use.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

As required by section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service addressed user capacities as part of this planning effort. Establishing user capacities is a challenging task for river managers because of the complex relationship between human uses and river values. Therefore, this plan recognizes that protection of resources and visitor experiences are best achieved through identification and articulation of desired conditions, proactively implementing a variety of management strategies and tools to sustain desired resources

and visitor experiences, measuring success at achieving conditions, and taking additional actions where needed (see pages 46–51 of the CRMP/EA for further discussion of user capacity guidelines).

Some commenters expressed concern that the plan did not actually discuss the maximum number of visitors that could be received in the river corridors. In response to this concern, please refer to the analysis beginning on page 163 of the CRMP/EA. The maximum levels of use outlined in table 7 are the estimated amounts of use each river segment can accommodate while protecting and enhancing river values and maintaining desired conditions given the management strategies and levels of development proposed for each alternative. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, the user capacities established for the preferred alternative are based on the best available information, including public input, and best professional management judgment.

One commenter made the following statement “By the NPS’s own admission the supposed ‘maximums’ presented in the CRMP are actual a ‘low’ level of use and not a true maximum.” Table 7 is a summary of visitor capacity differences among the alternatives, including maximum use levels. Table 7 states that maximum use for select river segments under alternatives B and C would be “set at the current peak use levels under alternative A; currently low levels of use; continue to manage use and monitor.” This statement was not entirely clear and will be updated. The original statement in table 7 was intended to explain that although current use levels are low, use levels would be allowed to increase up to current peak use levels. This increase would be allowed if monitoring of conditions suggested that additional visitor use is consistent with protecting and enhancing river values and maintaining desired conditions. All statements pertaining to maximum use being set at current peak use under alternatives B and C in table 7 will be updated to state, “Maximum use limits would be set at the current peak use levels, as described on pages 201–223 of the CRMP/EA, and this would allow some flexibility for visitor use to increase during non-peak periods.”

It should also be noted that under alternative B on certain river segments, maximum use was established at higher levels of use than alternative C, because alternative B would allow for more development and additional site management to accommodate and facilitate these higher levels of use. The same level of development was not proposed for alternative C. Alternative B was ultimately not identified as the preferred alternative. As summarized on page 173 of the plan, there would be additional adverse effects on natural resources under alternative B, beyond those under alternative C.

There was also concern that baseline data must be gathered where previous data does not exist or is not current. Summaries of current levels of use and associated data begin on page 201. As noted on page 51 of the plan, the Interagency Wild and Scenic River Coordinating Council acknowledges that to achieve a nondegradation standard, the river management agency must document baseline resource conditions and monitor changes to these conditions. The plan outlines monitoring guidelines for each of the river values identified for the Snake River Headwaters. The monitoring guidelines are presented in chapter 3 (pages 87–95). If monitoring demonstrates that visitor use impacts are not exceeding standards over time, the agencies could consider adjusting visitor capacities within an appropriate planning and management process to strike an appropriate balance between visitor benefits and resource protection and conservation. However, it should be noted that adjusting visitor capacities would require additional planning and associated compliance.

Clarifications

Concern Statement 1:

Commenters expressed concern that current planning and zoning regulations pertaining to riverside development were not discussed in the CRMP/EA. Commenters encouraged the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to consider working with, and providing guidance to, private landowners and local governments related to development and effects to the headwaters. Commenters also suggested the creation of a Snake River Headwaters working group. The organizations expressing interest in such a group included American Rivers, American Whitewater, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, the Committee of Nine (represented by Barker, Rosholt & Simpson LLP), and the National Parks Conservation Association.

American Rivers

Representative Quotes (Correspondence 161):

“American Rivers acknowledges that the WSRA gives the managing agency no authority to regulate development on private lands, except when a federal nexus exists (e.g., 404 permits for bank stabilization). However, we are disappointed that nowhere in the CRMP/EA could we find any discussion of how the Park Service plans to cooperative with and provide guidance to private landowners and local governments to ensure that new development activities within designated river corridors do not degrade river values.

“We suggest that the managing agencies charged with implementing the CRMPs create a Snake Headwaters Working Group, in which American Rivers would like to participate.”

Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

Representative Quote (Correspondence 114):

“Under the Wild and Scenic Act, section 6 states that the managing agency must work with local governments to ensure land regulation on private property is adequate to protect the river ORVs. Therefore under ‘Headwaters-wide strategies, partnership strategies’ it should state ‘work with local governments and private land owners who have property within the wild and scenic river designation to achieve common goals for managing the river (p.159).’”

National Parks Conservation Association

Representative Quote (Correspondence 116):

“We also encourage strong coordination with the Town of Jackson and Teton County. These entities could and should be closely involved with issues that involve adjacent private lands, as well as inholdings in the park. Private lands management plays an important role in preserving the rivers’ qualities and it would be a productive step for the NPS and NER to reach out to local government to develop guidelines to protect the ORVs of the rivers, including water rights issues, fence permeability, development setbacks, bank stabilization projects, and the enforcement of septic system regulations. The NPS and NER should document why local governments have protections in place, what those provisions are, and recommend when appropriate more stringent Town/County guidelines to better manage for wild and scenic river values on private lands.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

As stated under the headwaters-wide partnership strategies, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to work with a diverse group of federal and state agencies, local governments, communities, private landowners, and interested citizens throughout the implementation of this comprehensive river management plan. Both agencies look forward to

growing new collaborative relationships with stakeholders on the future of the Snake River Headwaters.

Concerning the absence of language in the plan on proposed cooperation with and guidance provided to private landowners and local governments to protect river values, please refer to the headwaters-wide partnership strategy. It was suggested that the fifth strategy be revised to include local governments in addition to private landowners. The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service support this change. Please refer to the attached summary of text changes at the end of this document for the updated language.

Concern Statement 2:

Several comments were received regarding a lack of accessibility for people with disabilities within proposed improvements to river access points.

Barker-Ewing Scenic Tours, Inc.

Representative Quote (Correspondence 119):

"In particular, I think we need to keep the American's With Disabilities Act of 1990 in mind, and allow those who are not well able to paddle hard to enjoy Oxbow Bend as the rest of us can. Which is something that needs to be mentioned on ALL of the river access areas, by the way."

Individual Commenter

Representative Quote (Correspondence 138):

"In general I wish the Park planners had addressed the issue of 'Accessible Rivers for Disabled and Ageing Paddlers' or just the ageing participant who wants to take a river trip with a commercial outfitter and can't negotiate the cobblestones at the access points. I believe all 9 of the access points addressed in this plan fail to meet national river standards for the volume of traffic they see and that being said the one you want to close, Cattleman's Bridge would be ideal for a handicap ramp and boat dock because the user could paddle out into the oxbow and return to the same ramp."

NPS and USFWS Response:

The CRMP/EA does not include implementation-specific designs for facilities, boat launches, trails, or parking areas under any alternative. That level of detail will be determined during the implementation phase, which will not only identify detailed options for construction, but will also determine feasibility for universal access and to meet minimum accessibility standards according to the Architectural Barriers Act, as well as the *Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas*. Language directed to this point is included in the introduction to "River Access Points Management Strategies," within chapter 3.

Concern Statement 3:

A commenter suggested additional explanation and visual tools to clarify changes made to the river corridor boundary delineation.

American Rivers

Representative Quote (Correspondence 161):

"We commend the Park Service for doing a superb job in mapping designated river corridors on pp. 33-44; and summarizing the acreage in each river corridor in Table 2 on pg. 34. However, we think the Park Service should include an additional table that shows significant boundary adjustments that were made to the default 1/4 mile buffers on either side of designated rivers; and provides the rationale for doing so. The Bridger-Teton National Forest included such a table on pg. 2-21 of its Forest Plan Amendment EA."

**Governor Matthew Mead, State of Wyoming
Representative Quote (Correspondence 165):**

“It is not clear where the wild and scenic corridor boundaries are located. More specific maps should be provided, especially in areas where the corridor boundary extends past the general ¼ mile boundary to the high water mark. These maps are needed to clarify boundaries and to supplement legal descriptions and general maps.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The CRMP/EA describes the methodology used to delineate the wild and scenic river corridor boundary and provides detailed boundary maps of each designated river segment. As required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the primary consideration in delineating the boundary is to ensure that all outstandingly remarkable values are encompassed within the corridor and that the corridor cannot exceed an average of 320 acres/mile (or an average of one-quarter mile from the ordinary high water mark on each side of the river).

As a point of clarification, the quarter-mile buffer is an average, rather than an absolute. The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service generally maintained the quarter-mile buffer for all river segments. However, in some cases this buffer was expanded, such as along the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park, due to the extensive braiding and dynamic nature of the active river channels. In other cases, the buffer was reduced where the river is constrained by steep landforms, such as along a portion of the north side of the Gros Ventre River. These minor deviations from the general quarter-mile buffer result in an average of 290 acres/mile for the entire wild and scenic rivers designation on NPS and USFWS lands.

As a follow-up to the CRMP/EA, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to publish a notice of availability of the boundary delineation in the *Federal Register*. Wild and scenic river boundaries do not become effective until the notice of availability has been published in the *Federal Register* and until 90 days after they have been sent to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives while Congress is in session.

Concern Statement 4:

Commenters requested the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identify extractive mining or oil and gas activities upstream of the headwaters that may impact water quality.

**Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality – Water Quality Division
Representative Quote (Correspondence 106):**

“Page 180, 2nd Paragraph: If there are any oil and gas activities causing threats to water quality upstream of the Snake River Headwaters segments managed by the NPS, they should be specifically identified.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

As stated in the CRMP/EA, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will work closely with the U.S. Forest Service to help ensure that activities on national forest lands will not adversely affect outstandingly remarkable values of the wild and scenic river segments in the watershed. A reference to this partnership with the U.S. Forest Service is noted in the “Headwaters-wide Management Strategies” section of the CRMP/EA (see pages 76–77). Likewise, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service will conduct section 7 evaluations as per the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The section 7 evaluation guidelines are noted on pages 78–81.

It should also be noted that the effects of actions related to mining and oil and gas development in the Bridger-Teton National Forest are germane to this CRMP/EA planning project in the form of cumulative impact analysis, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. As noted on page 252, the Council on Environmental Quality defines cumulative impacts as, “the impacts that result from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions.” As a result, per NEPA guidance, the land management activities and other uses on Bridger-Teton National Forest lands are included in the cumulative impact scenario description on pages 252–254. Likewise, the cumulative effects from such actions are noted in the impact analyses for various impact topics.

Concern Statement 5:

The CRMP/EA does not provide enough detail on the effects of climate change, including monitoring, protection measures, and altering habitats.

Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Representative Quote (Correspondence 141):

“Climate change is arguably the greatest threat to the Snake Headwaters. In our scoping comments we asked that the CRMP address the impact that climate change is having on designated rivers and their ORV’s by incorporating strategies for (1) monitoring the effects of climate change on flows, water temperatures and invasive species; (2) protecting and restoring riparian areas and critical coldwater refugia, such as springs, that are vital to fish survival and will become even more so; and (3) removing migration barriers so native fish can freely access coldwater habitats. We feel there are improvements to be made in this section of the CRMP.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

Overall, climate change, and the resulting effects of it, is a very complex and dynamic issue. As more climate data is analyzed and as changes in resource conditions are observed, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are gaining a better understanding of climate change in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Beyond the Yellowstone region, the NPS Climate Change Response Program is also continuing to gather information on climate change and factor it into park management decisions throughout the country.

More specifically, as part of the headwaters-wide management strategies, the CRMP/EA addresses climate change and its potential effects in the section title, “Guidelines to Address Climate Change” (see pages 81–83). In this section, broad strategies related to scientific understanding, mitigation, adaptation, and communication are emphasized and described. More specific management approaches for CRMP/EA implementation are also outlined. These strategies and approaches encompass the suggestions recommended by the commenter, including the incorporation of resource monitoring (e.g., flows, water temperatures, invasive species) and resource protection/restoration (e.g., for key natural resources that are at risk from climate change, such as critical coldwater refugia).

Although these management approaches and overarching strategies do not get to the level of detail for management actions as suggested by the commenter (e.g., recommendations for specific mitigation measures), these suggested management responses to climate change are all possible under this overall guidance in the CRMP/EA.

Concern Statement 6:

There was confusion over the meaning and use of the term “enhance” as used in the CRMP/EA. A commenter requested the agencies substitute the word “preserve” for the word “enhance” throughout the plan.

Governor Matthew Mead, State of Wyoming**Representative Quote (Correspondence 165):**

“Both plans [referring to the CRMP and the USFS plan] frequently use the term “enhance” and do not define that term. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (WSRA) uses the phrase “protect and enhance” [16 U.S.C. 1281 (a)]. The Legacy Act uses the word “preserve” and does not contain “enhance.” Absent a clear definition of “enhance,” I encourage substituting “preserve” for “enhance” in both plans.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The Craig Thomas Legacy Act added the Snake River Headwaters to the national wild and scenic rivers system with a requirement to develop a management plan for the newly designated rivers. The primary need for the plan is to ensure that management of the designated rivers is consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Section 10(a) of the act states:

“Each component of the national wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its esthetic, scenic, historic, archaeologic, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area.”

To ensure consistency with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the CRMP/EA uses the phrase “protect and enhance.” The term “enhance” means to improve the condition of a degraded resource or value. This is intended to complement the protection of resource and values that are not degraded. An example of this in the CRMP/EA is the improvement of aging boat launch sites along the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park. The purpose of these improvements is to enhance river-related resource conditions and to enhance the experience of visitors to these areas.

Concern Statement 7:

There were concerns communicated that the agencies propose to allow various levels of degradation to water quality and that such degradation allowances were included because river use is anticipated to increase.

American Rivers**Representative Quote (Correspondence 161):**

“...the Park Service proposes to allow various levels of degradation to water quality (up to 5%) and vegetation (up to 5%), depending on whether a river segment is classified as wild, scenic or recreational. We assume these degradation allowances were included because use of the rivers is expected to increase, not because management will become less protective of river values.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The commenter incorrectly states that the CRMP/EA proposes to allow various levels of degradation to water quality or vegetation. See table 7 for a summary of indicators and standards related to water quality and vegetation for various river segments. Some standards are set for no

more than 5% change in mean levels of constituents below normal baseline conditions for water quality; other standards are set for no more than 5% increase in vegetation loss per site. The plan does not state that it would allow for various levels of degradation. Standards are important in this context, because they may indicate the need for more proactive actions and define the minimal acceptable condition, not a condition of degradation.

Concern Statement 8:

Some commenters expressed concern that information presented in the plan is outdated or incorrect, and requested that updated information be included.

**Wyoming Department of Game and Fish
Representative Quote (Correspondence 166):**

“Impact Topics Included for Detailed Analysis – Natural Resources – Fish –

- *“Bonneville reddsideshiner” should just be “reddsideshiner”*
- *Longnose sucker are not native to or present in the Snake Headwaters and should be removed from the list of fish species*
- *“Leatherside chub” should be listed as “northern leatherside chub”*

“Impact Topics Included for Detailed Analysis – Natural Resources – Threatened and Endangered Species - Gray Wolf– This section should acknowledge the 2012 delisting decision and current WGFD management.

“Alt. B – Flagg Canyon – The correct scientific name for western pearlshell mussel is Margaritifera falcata. This should be corrected throughout the document.

“Alt. C – Pacific Creek (scenic segment) – States that ‘Under alternative C, recreational activities would remain the same as alternative A with improvements to the hunting camp.’ Further in this section it states ‘No overnight use is allowed.’ without reference to something specific. Currently, the hunting camp on Pacific Creek allows overnight use. We do not recommend a change in management in the Proposed Action.”

NPS Response:

The recommended corrections noted by the Wyoming Department of Fish and Game regarding the reddsideshiner, longnose sucker, northern leatherside chub, and western pearlshell mussel have been included in the summary of text changes at the end of this document.

The National Park Service acknowledges the oversight and confusion regarding “no overnight camping” and the improved hunting (i.e., elk reduction) camp in the Pacific Creek scenic segment. The statement on overnight camping has been modified in the alternative C description (in the “River Segment Management Strategies” section of chapter 3) and the applicable impact analysis section for the Pacific Creek segment (in chapter 5, “Environmental Consequences”). The statement should read, “No *dispersed* overnight camping would be allowed.” This clarification will allow continued overnight use of the designated hunting camp.

Regarding gray wolves, during development of the CRMP/EA, the gray wolf was removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species in Wyoming. Thus, the species should be considered one of special management concern, but no longer listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The information stated in the “Affected Environment” and “Environmental Consequences” sections does not change as a result of the delisting of wolves. In

all park units, the National Park Service retains management responsibility to protect all wildlife, including wolves, in keeping with NPS *Management Policies* 2006.

Concern Statement 9:

A commenter suggested locations for additional signage and interpretive displays in order to better inform the public about river wildlife/human interactions, values, designation, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the Craig Thomas Legacy Act.

American Rivers

Representative Quote (Correspondence 161):

“Lewis River- Scenic segment in Yellowstone NP (pp. 110-111)...

“Types/amounts of development: No new development, except expansions of roadside turnouts would be considered during the next major road reconstruction project. [Suggestion] A small Wild and Scenic sign should be installed where the highway crosses the river below Lewis River Falls.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The CRMP/EA does not include implementation of specific designs or locations for interpretive signs, displays, or waysides. This greater level of detail will be determined during the implementation phase of the plan. The CRMP/EA does address the general need for improvement and enhancement of interpretive and educational messaging in chapter 3 (“The Alternatives”) under the headwaters-wide management strategies. These strategies for interpretive and educational messaging are for the entire headwaters and therefore are not repeated within sections pertaining to river segments or river access points.

Concern Statement 10:

Commenters suggested additional language in goal 2 of the plan with an emphasis on managing for native species, particularly native trout. Another commenter suggested making this a separate and new goal for the plan focused on preserving the headwaters’ native plant and animal species, with a special emphasis on native trout.

National Parks Conservation Association

Representative Quote (Correspondence 116):

“We support the emphasis on preserving native fish and wildlife as its top priority, with a lesser emphasis on increased recreational uses. This relatively intact natural riparian system supports a robust native trout fishery. Many species of wildlife are dependent on Snake River Headwaters river system; including endangered species such as grizzly bears, wolverines, and gray wolves. These species find abundant food within river corridors, and wilderness qualities provide protective habitat for these reclusive species. The Park Service’s five goal statements identify future desired conditions within the CRMP EA, but could be improved with an emphasis for managing for native species, rather than solely the protection of habitats. These should also include native plant and animals, particularly native trout.”

NPS and USFWS Response:

The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concur with the suggestion to emphasize management of all native plant and animal species. Goal 2 on page 30 has been modified to read as follows, “Protect and enhance the natural function, diversity, complexity, and resiliency of the headwaters’ riparian areas, wetlands, floodplains, and adjacent uplands. Such efforts should aim to protect and enhance native plant and animal species.” This modification of goal 2 is consistent with and supportive of the various Headwaters-wide management strategies and adaptive management monitoring guidelines described in chapter 3 (“The Alternatives”).

SUMMARY OF TEXT CHANGES TO THE SNAKE RIVER HEADWATERS CRMP/EA

Page 30. Goal 2. Replace goal 2 statement with the following, “Protect and enhance the natural function, diversity, complexity, and resiliency of the headwaters’ riparian areas, wetlands, floodplains, and adjacent uplands. Such efforts should aim to protect and enhance native plant and animal species.”

Page 54. First line, left column. Add “local governments.” Should read, “. . .with local governments and private landowners regarding property within the wild and scenic river designation to achieve common goals for managing the river.”

Page 77. Last bullet, right column. Add “local governments.” This strategy will now read, “The National Park Service would work with local governments and private landowners who have property within the wild and scenic river designation to achieve common goals for managing the river. The wild and scenic river designation does not affect private property rights; however, projects occurring within the riverbed and banks may be subject to evaluation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.”

Page 89. In the "Monitoring Guidelines for Water Quality" table under "Past and ongoing monitoring strategies," replace "Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee Inventory and Monitoring Program" with “The NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program.”

Page 93. In the "Monitoring Guidelines for Ecological/Wildlife Values" table under "Past and ongoing monitoring strategies," replace "the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee Inventory and Monitoring Program" with “the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program.”

Page 119. First paragraph under section titled, “Alternative C (Preferred): Kinds and Amounts of Recreation Use.” Sentence will now read, “Under this alternative, River Road (along the west side of the Snake River) would remain open to public vehicular access (including bicycles) as conditions allow.”

Page 122. First paragraph under section titled, “Alternative C (Preferred): Kinds and Amount of Recreation Use.” Last sentence should read, “No dispersed overnight use would be allowed.” Adding the modifier “dispersed” would eliminate the confusion and conflict with the continued use of and improvements to the designated hunting camp in this segment.

Page 159. Last bullet under alternatives B and C. Add “local governments.” This strategy will now read, “The National Park Service would work with local governments and private landowners who have property within the wild and scenic river designation to achieve common goals for managing the river. The wild and scenic river designation does not affect private property rights; however, projects occurring within the riverbed and banks may be subject to evaluation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.”

Page 162. Table cells for Pacific Creek (scenic segment) and Buffalo Fork (scenic segment) under alternative C. Replace “Alternative B” with “Alternative C” in both locations.

Page 162. Table cell for Pacific Creek (scenic segment) under alternative C. Add “No dispersed overnight camping would be allowed” to end of paragraph.

Pages 165-172. Table 7. All statements pertaining to maximum use being set at current peak use under alternative B or C in table 7 will be updated to state the following: “Maximum use limits

would be set at the current peak use levels, as described on pages 201–223 of the CRMP/EA, and this would allow some flexibility for visitor use to increase during non-peak periods.” All information pertaining to “currently low levels of use” found in table 7 will be deleted to prevent confusion.

Page 183. First paragraph under section titled, “Fish (including aquatic invertebrates).” Delete “Bonneville.” Should read, “redside shiner.”

Page 183. First paragraph under section titled, “Fish (including aquatic invertebrates).” Delete “longnose sucker.” The longnose sucker is not native to or present in the Snake River Headwaters.

Page 183. First paragraph under section titled, “Fish (including aquatic invertebrates).” Should read, “northern leatherside chub.”

Page 276. First paragraph of Pacific Creek (scenic segment) section. Change “No overnight use is allowed.” to “No dispersed overnight use would be allowed.” Adding the modifier “dispersed” would eliminate the confusion and conflict with the continued use of and improvements to the designated hunting (i.e., elk reduction) camp in this segment.

Page 296. “Flagg Canyon” paragraph. Scientific name of western pearlshell mussel should read, “*Margaritifera falcate*.” Not “*facate*.”

Page 304. First paragraph of Pacific Creek (scenic segment) section. Change “No overnight use is allowed.” to “No dispersed overnight use would be allowed.” Adding the modifier “dispersed” would eliminate the confusion and conflict with the continued use of and improvements to the designated hunting (i.e., elk reduction) camp in this segment.

Page 306. First paragraph (continuation of “Flagg Canyon” section from p. 305). Scientific name of western pearlshell mussel should read, “*Margaritifera falcate*.” Not “*facate*.”

Page 320. First full paragraph. Replace “Alternative B” with “Alternative C” in the three locations it appears in this paragraph.

APPENDIX – NONIMPAIRMENT FINDING

In accordance with *NPS Management Policies 2006*, a determination of nonimpairment is required for park resources and values that may be impacted by the selected action. The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park resources and values. NPS managers must always seek ways to avoid, or to minimize to the greatest degree practicable, adversely impacting park resources and values.

However, the laws do give the National Park Service the management discretion to allow impacts on park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park, as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the National Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, will harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise will be present for the enjoyment of these resources or values. An impact on any park resource or value may, but does not necessarily, constitute impairment. An impact will be more likely to constitute impairment when there is a major or severe adverse effect upon a resource or value whose conservation is:

- necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park
- identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents

The park resources and values that are subject to the nonimpairment standard include

- the park's scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife, and the processes and conditions that sustain them, including, to the extent present in the park: the ecological, biological, and physical processes that created the park and continue to act upon it; scenic features; natural visibility, both in daytime and at night; natural landscapes; natural soundscapes and smells; water and air resources; soils; geological resources; paleontological resources; archeological resources; cultural landscapes; ethnographic resources; historic and prehistoric sites, structures, and objects; museum collections; and native plants and animals
- appropriate opportunities to experience enjoyment of the above resources, to the extent that can be done without impairing them
- the park's role in contributing to the national dignity, the high public value and integrity, and the superlative environmental quality of the national park system, and the benefit and inspiration provided to the American people by the national park system
- any additional attributes encompassed by the specific values and purposes for which the park was established

Impairment may result from NPS activities in managing the park, visitor activities, or activities undertaken by concessioners, contractors, and others operating in the park.

Impairment findings are not necessary for visitor use and experience, socioeconomic, public health and safety, environmental justice, land use, and park operations, because impairment findings relates back to park resources and values, and these impact areas are not generally considered park resources or values according to the Organic Act and cannot be impaired in the same way that an action can impair park resources and values.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Nonimpairment determinations were made for the following natural resource topics: water-related resources; vegetation, wildlife, and fish (including aquatic invertebrates); threatened and endangered species; and soils.

Water-related Resources

The Snake River Headwaters is a complex hydrologic system that drains approximately 3,465 square miles of land area in Wyoming and is a major tributary of the Columbia River. Less than 100 miles of the Snake River Headwaters flows through Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks and includes the Lewis River, the Snake River, Pacific Creek, Buffalo Fork, and the Gros Ventre River. All surface waters are designated as class I (highest of four water quality classifications) by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. The high water quality of these waterways results from protection of adjacent riparian areas and floodplains from development and overuse. However, during certain portions of the runoff period, tributaries to the Snake River below the Jackson Lake Dam transport large concentrations of suspended material due to the erosion of unstable streambanks and overland flow during melt. Tributaries throughout the watershed are natural high sediment systems.

The most common nonpoint source problem in the upper Snake River basin is sediment loading caused by irrigated agriculture, rangeland grazing, land development, levee construction, road building for oil and gas development, and off-road vehicle use. Another modification to the natural system is Jackson Lake Dam, which is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation and regulates the flow of the Snake River. Other threats to water quality within the headwaters include recreation activities such as camping, hiking, floating, snowmobiling, and horseback riding in heavily used areas.

The protection of the water-related resources of the headwaters area is important for sustaining the natural systems of the area. Elements of the selected action will have both beneficial and adverse impacts on the area's water resources. At a headwaters-wide scale, the beneficial effects of the selected action relate to the stronger, ecosystem-based partnership approach to managing the headwaters' natural resources, the use of formal user capacity indicators and standards for resource management, an effort to allow the continuation of natural river processes, and expanded interpretation and education programs. At a river segment and access point level, the beneficial effects relate to the restoration and revegetation of social trails and areas within boat launch sites and installing restroom facilities, thereby increasing riverbank stabilization and decreasing the amount of runoff, siltation, deposition, and fecal coliform contamination. The adverse effects of the selected action relate to erosion from visitor use and maintenance activities. In addition, boat

launch and river access expansions that remove or trample vegetation and compact soils, would result in increased riverbank destabilization, siltation, deposition, and greater runoff of vehicle and maintenance equipment emissions (e.g., oil, fuel, particulates). However, the adverse effects of the selected action will tend to be relatively localized. In addition, impact mitigation measures and the beneficial effects of this alternative's actions will offset some of these adverse impacts and improve hydrologic conditions. Therefore, the selected action will not result in impairment of water-related resources.

Vegetation, Wildlife, and Fish (Including Aquatic Invertebrates)

The Snake River Headwaters supports a diverse array of plant communities, wildlife, and fish. Variations in microclimates, soil conditions, and other natural and human-caused disturbance factors create a mosaic of native vegetation communities in the basin's floodplains, terraces, and waters, including upland forests and meadows, riparian areas, marshy meadows, floodplain forests, and aquatic plant communities. However, nonnative plant species are also a concern. Control measures are performed to reduce the population level of high priority nonnative plant species, using chemical, mechanical, and biological controls.

A wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species inhabit these natural communities. River otters, muskrat, and beavers inhabit aquatic and riparian zones. Small mammals such as red-backed voles, deer mice, pocket gophers, squirrels, and chipmunks are abundant in riparian and upland areas and provide important food sources for carnivorous mammals such as coyotes, martens, badgers, and weasels. Larger mammals that utilize the riparian and upland areas include moose, bison, elk, mule deer, pronghorn, black bear, mountain lion, wolves, and grizzly bear. A wide variety of amphibians, reptiles, insects, mollusks, and other invertebrate animals also inhabit the headwaters lands and waterways. In addition, there are more than 300 bird species within the area. Some of the more prominent species that use the river corridor's aquatic and riparian zones for feeding and nesting are the white pelican, great blue heron, bald eagle, osprey, trumpeter swan, Canada goose, and sandhill crane. A variety of other raptors, waterfowl, and neotropical migrants also use the river corridor.

The waters of the Snake River Headwaters are home to various native fish species, including the Yellowstone cutthroat trout, Snake River fine-spotted cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, longnose dace, redbside shiner, speckled dace, Utah chub, bluehead sucker, mountain sucker, Utah sucker, mottled sculpin, northern leatherside chub, and Paiute sculpin. Nonnative fish species found within Snake River Headwaters include longnose sucker, rainbow trout, lake trout, brook trout, golden trout, and brown trout. Although the regional distribution of native trout may have been reduced by more than 50% over the past 200 years due to a variety of human-induced impacts, such as overfishing and competition by nonnative trout, research indicates that healthy stronghold populations exist in several watersheds of the upper Yellowstone River and upper Snake River. However, continued threats to native fish species and aquatic invertebrates include disease, water quality and riparian area degradation, aquatic habitat fragmentation, the introduction of aquatic invasive species, loss of spawning gravel in tributaries, irrigation water diversions, and hybridization with nonnative fish such as the rainbow trout. Other notable threats, such as mining, timber harvest, and cattle grazing, exist throughout the region on other public and private lands.

The protection of the vegetation, wildlife, and aquatic resources of the headwaters area is integral to sustaining the overall natural systems of the area. Elements of the selected action will have both

beneficial and adverse impacts on the area's natural communities. At a headwaters-wide scale, the beneficial effects of the selected action relate to a stronger, ecosystem-based partnership approach to managing the headwaters' natural resources, the use of formal user capacity indicators and standards for resource management, an effort to allow the continuation of natural river processes, and expanded interpretation and education programs. At a river segment and access point level, the beneficial effects would result from the eventual termination of ongoing maintenance and rerouting of River Road, the restoration and revegetation of social trails, former river access, and boat launch sites, and installation of restroom facilities. These actions will improve the condition of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat, as well as increase riverbank stabilization and decrease the amount of runoff, siltation, deposition, and fecal coliform contamination that affect fish habitat. The adverse effects of the selected action relate to boat launch and river access modification projects that displace vegetation and habitat and cause riverbank destabilization, siltation, and greater runoff of vehicle and maintenance equipment emissions (e.g., oil, fuel, particulates). Additional adverse effects include erosion and vegetation trampling from visitor use and maintenance activities. However, the adverse effects of the selected action will tend to be relatively localized. In addition, impact mitigation measures and the beneficial effects of the selected action will offset some of these adverse impacts and improve ecological conditions. Therefore, the selected action will not result in impairment of vegetation, wildlife, and fish.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The natural communities described above also provide important habitat and conditions for a variety of federally listed mammal, bird, and plant species that are identified and protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Some of these species are also identified by the State of Wyoming as being Species of Greatest Conservation Need. These species include: grizzly bear, Canada lynx, gray wolf (recently delisted), North American wolverine, greater sage grouse, yellow-billed cuckoo, and whitebark pine. Chapter 4 of the environmental assessment includes the state and federal status and a description of these protected species. Because some federally and state-listed species that occur in Park and Teton counties may not occur within or near the boundaries of the headwaters, professional judgment of park staff and other subject matter experts was used to determine which listed species occur within the headwaters. Species that occur outside the boundary of the headwaters would not be adversely affected by the management actions of this plan. Also, although other federal and state species of concern are not included as part of the environmental assessment, these species would be protected under management direction set forth by NPS policy and the selected action. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service defines species of concern as those species in need of more concentrated conservation actions.

Some of the habitat and natural conditions for these listed species in the headwaters have been disturbed by past infrastructure and recreation development. Most of the direct species disturbances occurred prior to federal and state species listing. However, subsequent human uses and developments have also affected the species incrementally. Continued threats to listed species in the headwaters are areas of high recreational use (trails and waterways), social trail trampling and disturbances, invasive plant infestation, and additional park facility development. Also, land developments on private properties that are near or adjacent to the headwaters pose a long-term threat to these species. The above threats to listed species typically come in the form of sensory-based disturbances to the wildlife species and the loss, fragmentation, and/or alternation of habitat and plant communities.

The protection of threatened and endangered plants and animals in the Snake River Headwaters is important for sustaining the long-term health and biological diversity of the area's ecological system and for fulfilling the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Federally and state-listed species would experience the same broad effects from the selected action described under the "Vegetation, Wildlife, and Fish" section above. Generally, across all headwaters, segments, and river access points, the selected action would result in both adverse and beneficial effects on federally and state-listed species. The beneficial impacts would primarily result from enhanced habitat management and protection strategies noted in the "Vegetation, Wildlife, and Fish" section. In addition, other site-specific actions would reduce habitat disturbances. For example, several parking areas within the corridor would be consolidated (mainly at Flagg Ranch, along the road at Deadman's Bar, and at Schwabacher Landing), and the closure of the road at Cattleman's Bridge would reduce fragmentation and increase important grizzly bear habitat. The future closure of River Road would also eliminate the need for continual road maintenance and rerouting (and related habitat displacement) along the Snake River in this area and would allow some habitat restoration to occur. The adverse effects would primarily result from habitat alteration/loss and sensory-based disturbances caused by proposed alterations and relocations of river access points and increases in recreational use and maintenance activities in some areas. For example, sensory-based disturbances to listed species would be greatest in portions of the river corridors that would offer expanded recreational opportunities in proximity to their habitats. These areas could in turn attract greater numbers of visitors, resulting in heightened levels of noise and sight disturbance, which could cause species to avoid areas, especially during peak periods of visitor use. Some minimal modifications to various boat launches, trails, and the park road (near Buffalo Fork confluence) could also alter habitat conditions. Additionally, hikers and campers could also alter these habitats by repeatedly trampling vegetation from off-trail use. However, the adverse effects will be relatively small and/or localized to particular river access points and existing developed areas. In addition, mitigation measures and the beneficial effects of this alternative's actions will offset some of these adverse impacts and improve habitat conditions for listed animal species. Therefore, the selected action will not result in impairment of federal and state-listed species.

Soils

In the Snake River Headwaters, extensive, large-scale erosion and sedimentation processes have occurred over the millennia due to various stages of volcanism, glaciation, and uplift. The Snake River and surrounding lowlands were formed during three different glacial periods—Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Tertiary (whose features are geologically young). Sand, gravel, and boulders are remnants of alluvial and glacial deposits from these three periods. Glacial and recent alluvial terraces parallel the present floodplain throughout sections of the headwaters within the parks. Soils in the headwaters consist mainly of fine to coarse loams, fine to coarse silts, and mixes. They range from 17 inches to 60 inches in depth and vary from poorly to well-drained with low to high available moisture-holding capacities. The erosion and compaction of soil strata from human-induced activities continue to be the primary threat to soil resources in the headwaters.

The protection of soil resources is important for a variety of reasons, ranging from sustaining vegetation communities to protecting water quality in the headwaters' waterways. Elements of the selected action will have both beneficial and adverse impacts on the area's soils. At a headwaters-wide scale, the beneficial effects would result from a stronger, ecosystem-based partnership approach to managing the headwaters' natural resources, the use of formal user capacity indicators and standards for resource management, new mitigation strategies for soil resource protection, and expanded interpretation and education programs. At a river segment and access point level, the

beneficial effects would primarily result from the restoration and revegetation of social trails, former river access and boat launch sites, and installation of restroom facilities. These actions would improve soil-stabilizing vegetation, increase riverbank stabilization, and decrease the amount of runoff, siltation, and deposition. The adverse impacts relate to erosion resulting from continued visitor use and maintenance activities. In addition, boat launch and river access relocation or expansions that remove or trample vegetation and compact soils would result in increased riverbank destabilization, siltation, and deposition. However, the adverse effects of the selected action will tend to be relatively localized. In addition, impact mitigation measures and the beneficial effects of the selected action will offset some of these adverse impacts and protect soil resources. Therefore, the selected action will not result in the impairment of soils.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archeological Resources

The areas of the Snake River Headwaters corridor are rich in prehistoric and historic archeological sites. Archeological surveys along the floodplain below Jackson Lake Dam have been limited, although reconnaissance surveys have been completed for most of the river corridor. Few archeological sites have been found in the area immediately west or east of the river between Ditch Creek and Spread Creek, while most of the existing archeological sites near the floodplain are to the east on terraces set back from the river. It is probable that regular channel changes would displace or destroy archeological material on the floodplain. Prehistoric campsites around the lakes and the Snake River delta area above Jackson Lake provide the largest sources of information concerning prehistoric life in Jackson Hole. Archeological surveys in certain areas of the Snake River Headwaters continue to investigate and document the prehistoric cultural resources in the Snake River corridor.

Protecting and enhancing archeological resources as a component of the outstandingly remarkable cultural values is part of the selected action. The selected action will have long-term, negligible to minor adverse impacts on archeological resources due to visitor use, which will be mitigated through increased monitoring by park management. The impacts will be site-specific, and none of the impacts are anticipated to substantially diminish the overall integrity of archeological resources. In addition, the selected action will have a beneficial, long-term impact to archeological resources due to the preparation of an interagency prehistoric and historic resources study on the history of human occupation and use of the Snake River Headwaters. This study will become the basis of informed decision making in the future regarding how cultural resources, including archeological resources, should be managed. The selected action will not result in impairment of archeological resources.

Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes

Historic structures and cultural landscapes identified within the Snake River Headwaters corridor represent cultural remains of 20th century homesteaders, dude ranchers, conservationists, and early park administration. These resources were established close to the riverbanks to take advantage of the headwaters as a water source, but also to enjoy the river's scenic and recreational attributes. All historic structures and cultural landscapes known to exist within the Snake River

Headwaters corridor have been identified and evaluated under national register criteria. National register-listed or -eligible historic structures and cultural landscapes, such as the Yellowstone National Park South Entrance Road Historic District, Bar BC Dude Ranch, Elk Ranch, Menor's Ferry Historic District, 4 Lazy F Dude Ranch, Murie Ranch, and Snake River Land Company buildings, now stand as vestiges of the historic development that occurred at the Snake River Headwaters.

The preservation of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes will be ongoing to enhance river values as part of the selected action. Visitor uses that cause inadvertent wear and tear on the character-defining features of historic buildings, structures, or the features or patterns of cultural landscapes will result in negligible to minor site-specific, long-term adverse impacts. The preparation of an interagency prehistoric and historic resources study of the river corridor will have a beneficial impact due to an enhanced understanding of these resources in cultural resource management. The selected action will not result in impairment of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes.

Ethnographic Resources

For at least the last 10,000 years, American Indians occupied the lands in the designated wild and scenic designated corridor. Consequently, places and resources in the river corridor continue to hold both historical and contemporary traditional significance. To date, more than 300 ethnographic resources have been recorded at the parks that contain portions of the wild and scenic river corridor. These ethnographic resources include numerous native plants and nearly all wildlife species found throughout the Snake River Headwaters. The parks continue to collect data on ethnographic resources through consultations and oral history interviews with associated American Indian tribes.

The selected action will have beneficial impacts on ethnographic resources due to the expansion of interpretation and education programs aimed to enhance the understanding and awareness of vegetation, wildlife, and fish as ethnographic resources within the Snake River Headwaters. This understanding will lead to additional protection and preservation of the relationship between these species and tribal practices and beliefs. This enhanced programming will result in long-term beneficial impacts on ethnographic resources that are both local and regional. The selected action will not result in impairment of ethnographic resources.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The scenic landscapes of the Snake River Headwaters include views of the flora, fauna, geologic formations, mountains, plains, and historic structures. The visual resources here contain iconic scenery that represents elements that embody the essence of the American West and draw visitors from all over the world. The headwaters comprise seven designated wild and scenic river segments, for which each offer unique views of the landscape.

The unparalleled scenery of the Snake River Headwaters has been identified as an outstandingly remarkable value. Additional protection measures implemented under the selected action will enhance ongoing protection actions, resulting in long-term, minor, beneficial impacts on visual resources within the headwaters. The selected action will implement beneficial scenery conservation measures, such as minimal new facility and site development, vegetative screening of

development, and use of natural materials in new development. The selected action also strives to maintain current use levels to avoid further diminishing visual resources that would come from increased likelihood of seeing other visitors within the river corridor. Social trailing and the use of signs will be minimized under the selected action, and parking will become more consolidated and will be prohibited in key scenic areas in order to improve the integrity of visual resources. The selected action will not result in impairment to visual resources.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, as guided by this analysis, good science and scholarship, advice from subject matter experts, and others who have relevant knowledge and experience, and the results of public involvement activities, it is the professional judgment of the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that there will be no impairment of park resources and values from implementation of the selected action.